

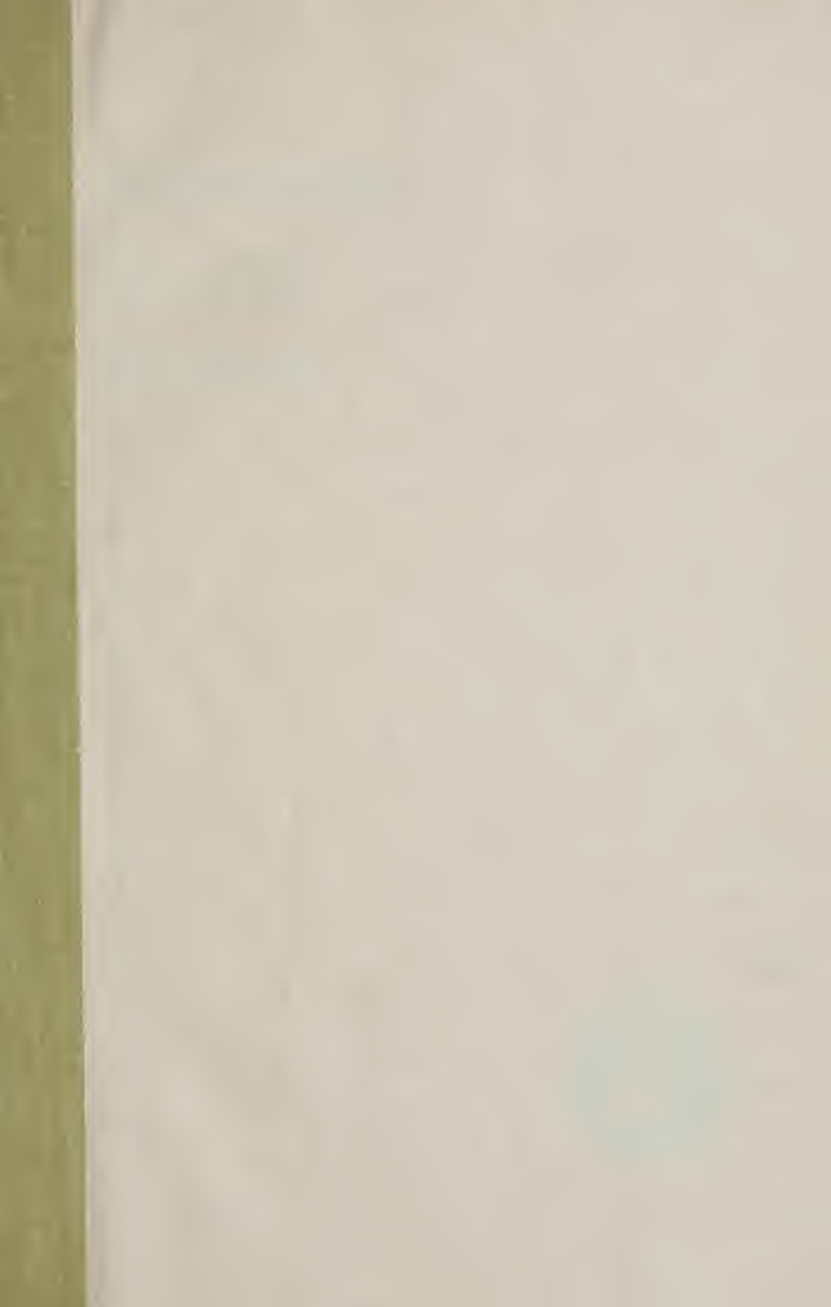
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ALEXANDER COUNTY PROFILES

(1963)







ALEXANDER  
COUNTY  
PROFILES





# ALEXANDER COUNTY PROFILES

A COMPILATION OF ESSAYS ON ALEXANDER  
COUNTY HISTORY BY CAIRO HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS



PUBLISHED BY THE WOMAN'S CLUB AND LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION OF CAIRO, ILLINOIS

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1968

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Know Ye That reposing special trust and confidence in the integrity, diligence and discretion of

*Jane Qualls*

On behalf of the People of the State of Illinois she is herewith Commissioned as a Member of the



STATE HISTORY COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED FIFTY  
OF THE

*Illinois Sesquicentennial Commission*

1818

1968

To have and to hold the said office, with all the rights and emoluments thereto legally pertaining.

"The Commission shall. . . in cooperation with all State agencies, departments, and commissions. . . plan, organize, coordinate and conduct such ceremonies, pageants and celebrations as are considered by the Commission to be suitable and appropriate for commemorating such anniversary."

Done at the city of Springfield, this fifteenth day of November A. D. 1967, and of the State of Illinois the One Hundred and Forty-Ninth.

OTTO KERNER, Governor

RALPH G. NEWMAN, Chairman



927.344  
927

## FOREWORD

The Woman's Club and Library Association of Cairo, Illinois, is publishing this non-profit book, which contains 39 essays by 34 Sophomore and Junior students from Mrs. Paul Quall's history classes at Cairo High School. Each essay received an award from the Illinois State Historical Society during the last six years.

Title for "Alexander County Profiles" was chosen by Mrs. Qualls. A special Sesquicentennial Award in recognition of her work with students is copied on the opposite page.

Mrs. H. N. Thistlewood, at the request of Mrs. Herman Hirsch, President of the Woman's Club, is Editor of this publication—Mrs. Thistlewood is Historian of the club, as well as a past president and is chairman of the Cairo Sesquicentennial Commission.

The suggestion that the book be published was that of Guyla Moreland, who is Alexander County Sesquicentennial Commission chairman and a local Historian.

Mrs. Thistlewood has had the complete support of the Cairo Sesquicentennial Commission (whose names are listed in the back of the book) and that of Mrs. Qualls, whose help has been invaluable.

These essays were carefully researched and nicely written. Alexander County and Cairo can be justifiably proud of these young people.

Library Assoc

## INDEX

AYDT, TOM—The Hower—Cairo's Priceless Treasure .....	5
BAKER, PHYLLIS—Where Earth and Heaven Met .....	6
Alexander County Courthouse .....	7
BUCHER, MARY ANN—Sisters of the Holy Cross .....	9
BUIE, JACK—Victorian Custom House .....	10
BURNS, TOM E.—Illinois Central Bridge—Link Between the North and South .....	11
CARTER, JANIS—Cairo, Its Beginning and Development .....	13
COMER, CHRIS—Magnolia Manor—Romantic Survival of Early Cairo .....	16
DUNKER, JUDY—Cairo's Fire Department .....	18
DUNKER, MARY JANE—Lumber—A Memento to Cairo's History .....	20
DUDLEY, PATTI—The Street that Never Slept .....	22
ELIAS, PATTY—Growth of a City—How it Was Made Possible .....	24
HAFFLEY, MONICA—The History of Cairo, Illinois .....	26
HASLAUER, CLAUDIA—The Grain Business of Cairo .....	27
HENRY, PAMELA—More than 100 Years in Education .....	29
HENSHAW, CYNTHIA—The Rebirth of a Church .....	30
HILBOLDT, JOHN—Two Outstanding Cairo Citizens .....	31
"The Day Has Come! ! The Opera House Opens Tonight" .....	33
HOPKINS, STEVE—The Great Race for Cairo .....	34
JOHNSTON, BARBARA—Cairo's Railroad Empire—1851-1910 .....	36
Our 100 Years in Cairo .....	37
KNIFFEN, JAN—The U. S. S. Cairo—Symbol of a Nation's Unity .....	39
KOE, ROSE—Riverlore: A Century of Beauty .....	40
Halliday Hotel—A Memory of the Past .....	42
MORELAND, JIM—Greek Revival Courthouse .....	43
MORGAN, DEBORAH—United States Marine Hospital .....	45
The Belle of Cairo, Illinois .....	46
MURRY, JOYCE—Darius Blake Holbrook—Securing a Foundation .....	47
OGG, JANA—Historic Courthouse at Thebes—Monument of Days Gone By .....	49
PATTON, JEFF—Goose Capital of the World— Horseshoe Lake .....	51
PIERCEALL, LESLIE—Fort Defiance State Park .....	52
PROFLET, DONNA—1858—Cairo Inundated .....	54
ROBERTS, PEGGY—The Magnolias .....	55
RYAN, SUSAN—Walls of Prosperity .....	57
SUMMERS, CHARLOTTE—The Herbert Home .....	58
SWOBODA, CARL—Cairo's Pride: The Mississippi and Ohio Rivers .....	61
WATKINS, DENISE—Cairo Public Library—Gift of Culture and Inspiration .....	62
WATSON, DARYL LYNN—The Last Link .....	64
WINTER, BILL—Early Schools of Cairo .....	65

# THE HEWER—CAIRO'S PRICELESS TREASURE

By TOM AYDT

## Introduction

At Ninth and Washington Avenue, in Halliday Park, in Cairo, Illinois, stands the statue of the Hewer. It was Miss Mary Halliday, a resident of Cairo, who commissioned George Grey Bernard to sculpture it in 1901. It was completed in 1904, and put on exhibit at the Columbian Exposition at St. Louis as one of the priceless art works of the period.

## Description

The Hewer is a bronze statue, six feet high, weighing 1,850 pounds. It is full of strength without strain. The swing of the mighty arm brings into play all the powerful muscles of the shoulder and chest. The figure shows not only sculptural "bigness"—that breadth of treatment which is essential in great art—but reveals an unusual emphasis in the matter of straight lines and planes, which give it remarkable carrying power. Close at hand, some of these planes may appear a trifle arbitrary, but at a distance, their value is felt in the assurance of structural strength and adequacy, which mere rounded bulk never conveys. In 1910, Lordao Taft deemed The Hewer to be one of the two best nudes in America.

## History of the Hewer

Miss Mary Halliday, a citizen of Cairo, brought the Hewer to Cairo. She had commissioned George Grey Bernard, her personal friend, to carve The Hewer in 1901. The letter Miss Halliday gave the Cairo Public Library in 1934 tells that The Hewer was first conceived in marble, but it was changed to bronze because of Cairo's extreme weather conditions.

The artist tried for ten months to complete the work in Cairo, but without success. Bernard finally sent his sketch to New York, where a price of \$3,000 was made to him. It was begun in 1901, and was not finished until 1904, at a total cost of \$6,000. It was then placed on exhibit in St. Louis, Mo., as one of the priceless art works of the period.

Bernard's conception was correct of Captain Halliday's character, and depicted him as a hewer—one who is capable of hewing out his own pathway and doing so. The Hewer, because of these things, has become a part of Cairo's tradition.

## The Sculpture Says:

In a letter to Mrs. J. Frederick Grieve in 1937, when she had spearheaded a movement to remodel and modernize the monument, Bernard said:

"The Hewer disappeared to my mind and the world when the terrible flood threatened your brave city, but you all stood like Horatio on the Bridge and saved your city." "My Hewer was created (strangely but true) from just such a vision of men laboring on the shore of a flood, hewing and dragging wood to save people from death and destruction." "My conception is: 'God's work is perfect and the only thing divine, so who has the right to change it or better it?'"

# WHERE EARTH AND HEAVEN MET

By PHYLLIS BAKER

A hundred years had not yet passed when one of the most serene structures in Cairo was dismantled and put to rest in the heart of all Cairoites.

St. Joseph's Church (St. Joe to the people who knew it well) was one of the most divine places of worship in Cairo. The Gothic exterior was of orange-red brick which was burned right here in Cairo in the home of Mr. Jacob Klein. Four stained glass windows of God's own children lined each side of the building. The welcoming recessed doors were shaped like an arch, and through them passed peoples of all faith and races. In the steeple hung three bells which Catholics and non-Catholics alike considered the most beautiful sounding church chimes in the surrounding area. These bells were donated by three prominent families of Cairo in memory of deceased members of their families. After St. Joe was torn down the bells were placed in the tower of St. Patrick's Church, which is also located here in Cairo.

The interior of the church was even more divine than the exterior. Between the stained glass windows, which were donated by the people of the parish, hung the twelve stations of the cross. Among the sacred statues it housed were the almost life-sized ones of St. Joseph, The Blessed Virgin, and The Guardian Angel. The altar and communion rail were of wood, inlaid with gold designs of holy origin. To receive the blessed sacrament of Holy Communion the congregation knelt on a felt covered kneeling rail. From the ceiling hung two chandeliers which provided for the main part of the church lighting. The church also contained a choir loft which proudly held an adult's mixed choir, an all men's choir, and a student choir.

The movement by the German Catholics to build St. Joe was begun in 1870 because the congregation felt that they had outgrown the capacity of St. Patrick's Church, and also because they decided to have a church of their own in which they hoped to have services in their own language.

The lots at the corner of Cross and Walnut Streets were purchased and on Sunday, October 22, 1871, the cornerstone was laid. The sixty-five by one hundred foot building was built by Mechler and Son of St. Louis, Mo. The cost of \$20,000 was donated by the members of the parish; some of which gave as much as \$1,000.

The opening ceremonies were held on April 22, 1872, during which both an English and a German solemn high mass were recited by the Reverend Cornelius Hoffman who readily won the love and confidence of his parish.

The first trustees of St. Joe were William Kluge and Peter Saup who faithfully served their positions for many years.

In 1879 St. Joe Stopped being solely a German church when Bishop Balter established a line of division between St. Joseph's and St. Patrick's Churches.

During its years of existence St. Joe Church contributed a number of young men and women to the religious life. Nine women became nuns and seven men were ordained into the priesthood. Currently there are three boys from St. Joe studying for the priesthood.

St. Joseph's Church also established a school which was erected on the lot behind the church in the winter of 1905-1906.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame taught and still teach in St. Joe School which stands today. Along with the establishment of a school came the building of an auditorium which was completed in 1928.

The monsignor Rudolph E. Jantzen was the priest who served the longest pastorate during St. Joe's 90 years of existence. During his pastorate the ladies of the parish formed the St. Joseph's Circle which took many steps toward progress in the church. One of their outstanding contributions was the purchasing of an electric organ to replace the old and worn pipe organ. Monsignor Jantzen also reactivated the Men's Holy Name Society which is still in existence today.

Another outstanding achievement of St. Joseph's Church which is presently recorded in the annals was the faithful and zealous thirty-five years of service rendered by Miss Anna Aydt who was the housekeeper of St. Joe's rectory.

In ninety short years St. Joe came to live and thrive in the hearts of the Catholic and non-Catholic, Cairoites alike. Though it has been destroyed, the memory it left behind is one which will never perish.



## ALEXANDER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

By PHYLLIS BAKER

### Introduction

Tall columns, an iron trimmed balcony, wide entrance steps, and deeply recessed windows with arched frames show the dignity possessed by the classic Greek lines of the Alexander County Courthouse.

### History

"The county seat of Alexander County is to be moved from Thebes to Cairo." These words were officially printed in the Mound City Emporium on November 10, 1859.

As early as 1848 there was dissatisfaction with the location of the courthouse at Thebes. Anyone wishing or having to attend court hearings and other county affairs would have to travel from Cairo to Thebes by steamboat which caused many delays. The courthouse at Thebes was also at the point where it had seen better days—prisoners were even escaping by digging away a portion of the wall. Something had to be done!

A Cairo newspaper owner, Addison H. Saunders, actually started the movement for a new courthouse. His pleas, however, were ignored for many years (the war played a big part in this). It was not until 1859 that any real progress was made. On February 8, the Illinois Legislature passed a law to hold an election on the first Tuesday of November to see if the people desired to move the county seat to Cairo. The results of the election (which was held on November 8, 1859) were quite favorable. A look at the records shows 570 people were for the move and 390 were against it.

On January 8, 1863, a special term of the court which petitioned the Senate and House of Representatives was held. Later in that month the legislature authorized the county of Alexander to issue bonds to construct a large and commodious courthouse at Cairo.

Citizens lost no time in getting bids for the awarding of a contract to build the courthouse. This contract was let to Mr. J. K. Frick



on March 2, 1863, for \$28,000. After he had done a large portion of the work Frick surrendered his contract. A new contract for completion was drawn up and let to John Major for \$32,000.

In the early part of 1865 the citizens of the county saw their "dream come true"—their new courthouse was completed. People lost no time in moving into their new courthouse. The first court term was held in July, 1865. Judge John Mulky presided over the Court of Common Pleas.

### **Description**

From the time of its completion until 1935 the courthouse saw only minor repairs (one being the ventilation of the vaults to prevent dampness). In 1935 it underwent a refurbishing done by W.P.A. However, many a cry of indignation was voiced when the paint arrived. It was, unfortunately, the dreadful color of horseradish mustard. After many heated arguments it was learned that it was "use this paint or none." With much dissatisfaction it was finally painted and it was 1941 before our courthouse was restored to its beautiful white.

All the things done by the W.P.A. weren't like the paint incident. With W.P. A.'s help the grounds were landscaped; irises, roses, and althea lined the driveway and walk. The V.F.W. cannon was given a bright coat of paint. Magnolias and sycamores also added to the beautiful landscaping.

There are three main floors in our courthouse: the basement, the first (main) floor, and second floor. All three floors are handsomely done in the original white oak furnishings.

The basement contains the maid's and cook's quarters, the kitchen for the jail, the Deputy's Office, a small vault, and the county jail.

The first floor contains the Circuit Clerk's and Recorder's Office (Mr. John Dewey has held this office for 48 consecutive years), the County Clerk's Office, County Sheriff's and Tax Collector's Offices, the County Court Room and County Judge's Office. The original vaults which are located between the County and Circuit Clerk's Offices are also on this floor.

The second floor contains the main courtroom (for circuit cases and big county cases), the County Superintendent of School's Office, the State's Attorney's Office, and the jury room.

In 1958 a new vault was built for the County Clerk's Office and a new addition for the County Superintendent of Highways was also added. At an earlier year the original back porch (on first floor) was closed in for the office of the County Assessor and Treasurer.

### **Conclusion**

Our courthouse has been the scene of many dramatic events; murder trials, death sentences, and life imprisonments. Oratory of the highest order has echoed through its walls as prosecution and defense attorneys pleaded for and against the lives of prisoners. It has also been the scene of many public and political gatherings. It has been threatened by fires and floods. It could tell numerous tales of human misery and wrongdoings. On the other hand, it could tell of many delightful events.

Next year our courthouse will be a hundred years old; next year our courthouse will be torn down. Progress? Yes, the old must make way for the new. The old front and two new additions will remain as a basis for the upcoming courthouse which, we're all sure, will capture the beauty and dignity of our present courthouse.

# SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS

By MARY ANN BUCHER

October 21, 1861, was the beginning of many years of service in Cairo, Illinois, for the Sisters of the Holy Cross. On that night, the Sisters at the Saint Mary's Academy, Notre Dame, Indiana, received an appeal from the Governor of Indiana. He wanted them to serve as nurses on the battlefield. As soon as they heard the message, they willingly volunteered their help. No later than the next day six nuns departed for Cairo to meet with General Grant, whose headquarters were now in Cairo.

Meanwhile, in Cairo, the hospital facilities were over-filled. Houses, churches, school buildings, and every possible place provided shelter for the soldiers wounded in battle.

On October 24, Mother Angela Gillespie and the other five volunteers arrived in Cairo, yet she was not to meet with General Grant until two days later. When this day came, Mother Angela was warmly welcomed by Grant. He looked at his visitor with a kind smile and said, "Mother Angela, I am very glad indeed to have you and your Sisters with us."

From here the Sisters received their orders for service in areas near Cairo. Mother M. Liguori, provincial superior, and a band of six nuns went to war. They served in St. Louis, Mound City, and Cairo. On December 14, 1861, Sister M. Ferdinand came to Cairo with three other Sisters. Then she accompanied Mother M. Angela to Mound City, leaving the others at the hospital in Cairo under the direction of Dr. Burke. On December 31, 1861, a third group of Sisters arrived in Cairo at the request of the Secretary of War. The next day they saw the frightful condition of the hospital which was called The Bulletin (later changed to St. John's Hospital). Dr. Burke, the Surgeon in charge requested Mother Angela to allow the Sisters to remain here in Cairo. The three Sisters who stayed began work immediately and within a few days the hospital was comparatively clean.

The service of the Holy Cross Nuns had been so outstanding that they were confronted with the request to open a hospital here. In October, 1867, Sister Augusta and Sister Matilda came to start a hospital or perish in the attempt to do so. Within a few days they had raised \$153 by means of a house-to-house canvass and on November 26, 1867, St. Mary's Infirmary was opened in a house on Eleventh Street between Poplar and Commercial. Before much time had elapsed they found it necessary to move to a larger building. On January 1, 1868, they moved to the Pilot House located on the site of the present Armory.

There was still a lack of room until the Cairo Trust Property came to the rescue by giving an entire block to be used for a hospital site. A large two-story building, now the annex, was obtained. It had previously been used as a river warehouse and a detention barracks for soldiers during the war. Since it was too large to be moved across the street, it was necessary to take it down, haul it to the new site, and rebuild it. The new hospital was opened December 18, 1869.

Additions to St. Mary's Hospital were built in 1892 and 1902. As the hospital grew it acquired new and modern equipment. St. Mary's even had an x-ray machine that took away man's last privacy, that

of his insides. At the time of the third addition, St. Mary's Hospital was the largest and best hospital between Memphis and St. Louis.

St. Mary's Hospital, now under the directorship of Sister Mary Clarissa, has brought more to Cairo than many of her industries. This service to Cairo was all made possible by Holy Cross Sisters. These remarkable women were begged to come to Cairo, and their skill, quietness, gentleness, and tenderness made them invaluable to St. Mary's Hospital.



## VICTORIAN CUSTOM HOUSE

By JACK BUIE

As I sat and looked out the water frosted glass windows of the Cairo Public Library, mighty torrents of rain fell and the winds howled around the 85 year old structure across the street that stands like the Rock of Gibraltar. I am referring, of course, to the Custom House of Cairo or what is more commonly known as "The Old Post Office." It is a living monument to the history of Cairo, Illinois, and its people.

Traveling back more than a century into the past to the 18th day of February, 1859, one year before the Civil War, the legislature ceded to the United States jurisdiction over block thirty-nine in the city for the construction of a building for a United States Court, a post office and a custom house.

"The trustees of the Cairo Property, on the 28th day of April, 1866, conveyed to the United States the said block, bounded by Washington Avenue, Poplar Street, and Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets; and in the years 1868 to 1871, various appropriations, amounting to one hundred and eighty-four thousand dollars, were made by Congress for the erection of the building on the block."

The entire cost of the property and building is said to be over two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The government began the erection of the building in the year 1868 and was completed in 1871.

The architectural building consists of four stories in a rectangular shape with two wings, a story lower and extending on out toward Washington Avenue and Poplar Street from opposite sides of the main body. It is constructed of stone and has a metal framework.

The interior is one of marked beauty with offices on the 1st, 2nd and 4th floors. On the third floor is the court room with its ornamented carved fireplace. The walls are very thick for insulation and the ceilings are vaulted high to keep it cool in hot weather.

The building was planned by the supervising architect at Washington, D. C., Mr A. B. Mullett. He designed the structure so the main floor of the building would be one the same level as the levees. This was the latest in safety measures.

This recalls the fact that before that time, it was the desire of the people to have all the buildings of a permanent character erected to the grades of the levees; and the city established such a grade just in case of high water from the two rivers, Ohio and Mississippi, that make up Cairo's boundaries.



The building in the prime of its life contained the post office, United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois, clerk's and marshal's offices, and the Signal Service Bureau. The latter was the most complete in equipment and of great value in determining weather forecasts to the whole country. Later, when the new post office was built (1940) most of the Government Offices were transplanted into the new and present dated building.

The Old Custom House since 1940 has contained numerous offices, but at the present date houses only the Cairo Police Department, which occupies the first floor of this beautifully constructed building of the past.

Whirling back to the present, the sky has cleared and the setting sun's orange rays are gleaming against the proud historical building that for so long has stood for the glory of justice.



## ILLINOIS CENTRAL BRIDGE—LINK BETWEEN THE NORTH AND SOUTH

By TOM E. BURNS

On October 29, 1889, a tremendous feat of engineering, and in the 19th century a sometime called wonder of the world, the Illinois Central Railroad bridge was opened. A gigantic "S" shaped structure some four miles long, it was hailed as an engineering feat of the century, but for one to fully appreciate the feat we must go back to the beginning.

Such a bridge had been a dream of many people since the formation of the Illinois Central Railroad. Shortly after the Civil War the Paducah and Illinois Bridge Company was formed and the spirit behind this company, Judge Lawrence S. Tremble, the president of the New Orleans and Ohio Railroad (now part of Illinois Central Railroad) wanted to build a bridge across the Ohio River at Paducah, Ky., but these plans failed to develop.

The state of affairs remained quiet until 1879 when W. K. Ackerman, president of the Illinois Central, conducted a survey to find the most feasible point on the Ohio above its emptying into the Mississippi this point was Cairo.

The next logical move would have been to start construction at Cairo, but pressure was put on Congress and Kentucky legislation to build the proposed bridge at Paducah. In March of 1886 the Kentucky Act provided for a bridge "at Cairo or any point within five miles above the upper corporate limits of Cairo and Paducah.

Oddly enough, the border between Illinois and Kentucky is at the low water line on the Illinois side. Thus at low water practically the whole river belongs to Kentucky. The Illinois Central was convinced that it would be better to let the Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans Railroad build the bridge because there would be less obstruction in the Kentucky legislatures and the Illinois Central did control this railroad. The reason this company was chosen was that it was a southern branch railroad.

So a contract was signed with the Union Bridge company and George S. Marison was obtained as head engineer.

On July 1, 1887, work was begun on the caissons; and on July 26, 1888 work was begun on the steel work. And on August 28, 1889 the bridge was completed.

The original bridge was 20,461 feet long. The metallic portion was 10,560 feet long and the bridge proper 4,644 feet long. There were borings 86 feet deep on the Illinois side and 193 feet on the Kentucky side. The clearance above low water was 104.2 feet and the total height of the bridge was 284.94 feet. The cost of this tremendous structure was \$2,952,286.00.

October 29, 1889, a never to be forgotten day in the history of Cairo, the Halliday House was full as were the other hotels. Early on the morning of the 29th nine seventy-five ton Mogul locomotives arrived, and shortly the first cab started across the bridge with the president of the Illinois Central in it. Before long, all nine locomotives were on the bridge with a combined weight of six hundred seventy-five tons; thus dispelling the fear that the bridge wouldn't support heavy weight. Immediately following the locomotives was the first regular scheduled locomotive to cross the bridge with Martin Egan at the controls.

This bridge closed the last transportation gap between the North and the South. Also, it was so well constructed that no important changes were made until 1949.

From 1890 the Illinois Central Railroad Bridge was in constant use by the Illinois Central lines and the Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio, helping to link the North with the South in railway transportation.

In the early 1940's laws were made limiting the amount of load a train could carry and the speed of a train crossing the bridge. This was because through the years there had been no major repairs and the bridge was beginning to show the wear and tear of the years. In the late 1940's these laws began throwing the trains off schedule and costing the railroad money. Something had to be done!

The Illinois Central decided on a complete reconstruction of the bridge. A joint contract was let to the Massman Construction Company and the Kansas City Bridge Company, with the concrete furnished by Edgar Stephens and Sons Ready Mix Concrete Company and the steel for the superstructure was furnished and erected by the American Bridge Company.

In 1949 the work on the bridge was begun. The work was very complex and very difficult. A wooden ramp, approximately 350 feet long was built from the Ohio levee protruding over the Ohio River. The concrete trucks would then back down this ramp and dump their concrete into buckets on a barge waiting below. The barge would then take the concrete out to the bridge where coffer dams had been built around the piers and pumped dry. Tremie tubes, known in construction terminology as "elephant tusks," had been lowered into the dam; and a special "high early strength concrete" with a water-proof additive, which was especially made by Marquette Cement Company of St. Louis, was poured in them. By this time water had entered the dam and all of this was taking place under water. The concrete was allowed to set for awhile and the tremies were then removed. This operation could not be stopped once it was started, and they sometimes worked day and night for fifteen and sixteen hours to finish. A difficult and time consuming task, the above procedure had to be performed on every pier of the bridge.

Besides the strengthening of the piers, all of the steel trestles had to be replaced. This could have meant closing the bridge for as much as two or three years, but a method was developed so that the bridge was never closed for more than four or five hours at a time. This was accomplished by cutting trestles in sections and dropping them into the river. As soon as a section was dropped off one side of the bridge the new replacement was brought in by barge from the other side and lowered into place by a crane. Later, divers used underwater torches to cut the old trestles into small sections so that they could be removed from the river easier. They had to be removed as they were a hindrance to navigation.

This operation begun in 1949, was completed in early 1952 at a cost of \$6,500,000. An amazing factor is that in all the time of this highly dangerous procedure, and much to the credit of the contractors, only one man was killed.

The Illinois Central Railroad Bridge may have lost some of its glory from days of old, but it is still an important link in the Illinois Central chain and will continue to be for many years.



## CAIRO—IT'S BEGINNING AND DEVELOPMENT

By JANIS CARTER

In this paper I will try to show the beginning struggles, and development of a town whose principal advantage lay in its splendid geographical situation. We know there was an awareness of the value of the site as early as the first French explorers. Indians probably used the site as a camping ground long before that, since both hunting and fishing were good. Indian mounds found in the area testify to the presence of Indians at an early date.

Several attempts were made to establish a town on the site of Cairo. The first of these attempts failed because of lack of financial backing and small faith in the site, because of the surrounding rivers. Progress was definitely slow because of the flood conditions of the area.

The early settlers were rough and rugged. The first building was a tavern, the second a store. These were followed by a woodsman's shanty. The history of Cairo includes men who left their imprint on Cairo both in ideas and buildings.

Marquette and Joliet, the first white men to explore the upper length of the Mississippi River, glided past the site of Cairo in 1673. They noted the formation of the land at the confluence of the rivers. In 1682, La Salle's expedition reached the site of Cairo and noted the joining of the rivers, the low banks, marshy land, walnut trees and other timber.

In 1702 Charles Juchereau de St. Denys, Lieutenant General of the Jurisdiction of Montreal, obtained a royal concession near the mouth of the Ohio River, where he established a tannery in 1702.

In 1721, Charlevoix, a Jesuit missionary, wrote at Kaskaskia that the place at the confluence of the rivers was not fit for settlement.

His advice was not heeded and settlement was made on the Mississippi from Alton to Chester, Illinois, north of the site of Cairo

In 1778, George Rodgers Clark entered the Illinois Country with a small force and captured the British posts at Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes. In 1779 in a letter to Thomas Jefferson he gave his opinions and ideas concerning this land. The area was subject to seasonal rises of the rivers and for that reason the fort, named Fort Jefferson, was built on the east bank of the Mississippi, five miles downstream from the site of Cairo. This fort was so placed to maintain possession of the frontier, Fort Jefferson was attacked in 1781 and after the siege all left except several members of the Bird family. The Bird family settled on the west bank of the river opposite the site of Cairo. This area is still known as Bird's Point.

Archie Henry surveyed for the Federal Government township 17 comprising the site of Cairo in 1807. Shortly after a keelboatman landed at the junction of the rivers and found a polehut on stilts, a canoe and stakes driven into the water as mooring posts.

The crew of the New Orleans, the first steamboat to go down the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans, saw Indians in canoes among the trees on the land flooded by the Mississippi at the mouth of the Ohio

In 1817 Captain Henry W. Shreve, builder of the first double-deck steamboat, showed that the rivers could be navigated by shipping a full cargo from Louisville, Kentucky, to New Orleans and back in twenty-five days. This trip convinced traders and builders that the Ohio and Mississippi were to be avenues of trade and travel. The land at the junction became a desirable investment and the site of Cairo was purchased four months later.

In 1817 William and Thomas Bird took about 300 acres of what is now the south part of Cairo. At the same time John Gleaves Comegys, a merchant of Baltimore and St. Louis, took 1,800 acres. William and Thomas Bird planned no settlement other than a spontaneous outgrowth of shops and dwellings caused by the development of the mid-west. Comegys, however, obtained an act, passed by the Territorial Legislature incorporating the City and Bank of Cairo. "The bill provided that a city be platted; that a third of the money derived from the sale of lots be used to construct levees; and that the remaining funds be invested in the Cairo Bank. The city was named Cairo because of the supposed similarity of its site to the land at the Nile delta."

These facts show an awareness of the value of the site from early exploration and although it was years before a town was built references can be found as to the desirable land at the confluence of the rivers.

In 1828 the Birds brought slaves across the river and built a tavern, two frame houses and a store. Later Judge Sidney Breese enlarged Comegys plan which included construction of a railroad from Cairo to the Illinois and Michigan Canal. This railroad was to form a link between the rich farming region on the Great Lakes and large rivers of the south. Breese interested Anthony Olney, Alexander M. Jenkins, Thomas Swanwick, Miles A. Gilbert, and Donald J. Baker, who pooled resources with Breese and in 1835 bought all of the present site of Cairo with the exception of the Bird's property. Although Judge Breese's group was composed of astute men, it lacked the empire-builder necessary to promote the plan financially and politically. Such a man appeared in the person of Darius Blake Holbrook.



Holbrook met Judge Breese at Vandalia and instantly impressed him with his glowing conception of Illinois. When the State Legislature incorporated the Central Railroad in 1836, the name of Holbrook appeared as the treasurer of the company, along with those of John Reynolds, Sidney Breese, Pierre Menard, and fifty-five other incorporators who were commercial and political leaders of Illinois. In Washington a congressional committee approved a memorial to congress for Federal Aid to build the road. This measure was superceded by an act of the Illinois Legislature. In accord with the building of roads, bridges and canals the Illinois Legislature passed an act for a General System of Internal Improvement in 1837. This act made Holbrook practically owner and master of Alexander County. A large frame house was built for Holbrook's use, and, nearby, a spacious hotel was erected to accommodate in-coming settlers. The population of Cairo mounted to one thousand within a year. The precise status Holbrook intended for Cairo remains unknown; in 1840 his plan failed. The State of Illinois repealed the 1837 act stopping work on the Central Railroad. At this time news came of the failure of the John Wright Company in London. The rumor that the English firm controlled the Cairo Bank sent the value of its notes to nothing in St. Louis and Chicago. The town, with its bright future, became bankrupt. All the inhabitants who could rushed from the city. Those who could not leave continued to run the ironworks and shipyard. In 1841 the steamboat "Tennessee Valley" built by Cairo workmen was launched. This was the anticlimax of Holbrook's City. Industry stopped, population grew even smaller and the town was practically deserted. Holbrook seeing the end and knowing where the blame would be placed left before the storm broke. Then in 1842 as a final touch a flood entered the incompleted levee and put a definite end to the venture. It was at this time that Dickens, who had supposedly lost money in the venture, made his well-known remark as to the "desolate, dirty, dismal swamp which was Cairo." The life period of the town during this period was three years.

The Cairo City and Canal Company was succeeded by the Cairo City Property Trust.

In 1843 there were only about fifty persons living in Cairo. Steamboats were still going up and down the rivers. They stopped at Cairo for supplies and passenger transfer. The few residents of the village thrrove. There were no rents or taxes to pay.

When the Illinois Central Railroad Company was incorporated by the State Legislature in 1851, the growth of Cairo was stimulated. Industries came to Cairo. Ferry service was a thriving business. Many boats were using the river. To accomodate new businesses, homes were built, and stores opened. But labor methods changed and river traffic was replaced and the town began. Although Cairo may never be the great metropolis her builders thought it, it will continue to live.

People of Cairo are proud of the old landmarks, and homes built by men who had faith in the town. Along the water front may still be seen remains of business houses and hotels that did a thriving business during the time of great river activity. The iron grillwork of some of these buildings are works of art. The water front is now quiet. Although the struggle has been great the town was made from a dismal swamp. Its story has been rough, rugged and in some respects dramatic and certainly most interesting.

# MAGNOLIA MANOR—ROMANTIC SURVIVAL OF EARLY CAIRO

By CHRIS COMER

## Introduction

"Twenty-seven hundred Washington Avenue is an old address in Cairo, historic and time-honored. Set well back from the street, sheltered by magnolia trees and jeweled with a sparkling fountain weathered in ivy is the stately fourteen-room red brick house which was constructed by Charles A. Galigher in 1869."

## Magnolia Manor

Magnolia Manor, a stately 14 room brick mansion, was constructed by Charles A. Galigher in 1869. The foundation, after being laid, was allowed "to set" for one year and construction was begun again. The house was finished in 1872 with walls of double brick with a 10 inch air space for insulation. The house was finished and decorated with the finest furnishings of its time.

A noted visitor in the Galigher home was General U. S. Grant, who was stationed in Cairo during the Civil War. In 1880 after Grant was President he returned to Cairo, after a trip around the world, to visit his old friend, Charles Galigher. After his arrival there was a reception given in his honor; which was given this description in the Cairo Daily Bulletin of April 17, 1880: "A display of beauty and magnificence never before equalled in Cairo. The Galigher mansion is an honor to the suburban life of Cairo . . . it combines all that abundant wealth and exalted taste stimulated by the proper degree of enterprise could suggest or procure . . . Hundreds of gas jets flashed brilliantly upon its grandeur and fell upon a scene of magnificence rarely to be witnessed anywhere."

Mr. Galigher, in 1910, sold the house to H. H. Candee of Cairo, who in turn sold it to a Chicago businessman, P. T. Langan, who became a Cairo lumberman. In 1948, Mrs. Langan sold the house to Colonel Fain White King, a noted archeologist and author. After a short time, the Kings left Cairo and the house stood empty for 2 years. Each owner kept the house in good repair appreciating it was a land mark of the City of Cairo.

Because the Galigher home was the scene of the Grant reception and visit and because of its ornate style of architecture, and being typical of fine homes of the Victorian period—it was included in the Illinois section of the Historic Building survey. Therefore, it was decided to undertake the preservation of this historic Mansion as the initial project of the Cairo Historical Association.

## Architectural Significance

The mansion had one of the first air conditioning systems of its design in America. A lever in the attic raised the hall dome lid and in turn raised the sky-light. Each room has a grilled vent above and at the side of each carara marble fireplace also helped with the conditioning of the air.

Mr Galigher designed an intercom system for the summoning of servants and room to room conversations. This was accomplished by a network of tubes throughout the frame of the house.

This Victorian mansion also had a bathroom and a system of running water. Water was drawn from one of many wells and then it was pumped by hand to the storage tank on the fourth floor—with the bathroom on the second floor, gravity made a unique running water system.

Plays were very popular in the Victorian period, so many plays were given at the Galigher mansion in the 1800's. The plays were held in the drawing room, the stage was at the east end and the entrances were made through the back windows from the back porch. The children's plays were given in the upstairs hall.

The original jalousies are still in use in the floor-to-ceiling windows over the entire house.

Several parts of the property have been destroyed with the modernization of the city. The carriage house, where the carriages and horses were kept, was on 27th St. A set of tennis courts were on the north lawn, these were lighted by gas lights for night playing and were also destroyed.

## **BRIEF ARCHITECTURAL HIGH LIGHTS**

### **The Galigher Room**

The plaster cornice, which encircles the entire room in an intricate, exquisite design of grapes and leaves, is one of the most beautiful in America. The ornamental arches and columns are dramatic architectural features which accept the splendor of the room. Also of significance is the patrician woman's head which is part of the archway motif; this is said to be a likeness of Queen Victoria who was greatly admired by Charles Galigher and who was supplied flour by the Galigher's mills through her agent, L. R. Finch of New York.

The twin mantles of fine Italian marble beautify the room, and the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Galigher were given by their son, Fred Galigher, who restored many fine original furnishings to the Manor.

### **The Library**

The green and gold leaf wall paper was discovered by Richard Hagan in a warehouse where it has been in storage for over 50 years. The library alone contains over 1,000 books dating from 1854.

Over the white marble mantle is a painting "Scene of the Nile" which was purchased from Marple of St. Louis for \$500.00 by Mr. Galigher. Many original Galigher paintings are throughout the house. One of many very famous is "Ambrois Pari"—painted in 1551.

### **Damask Room**

The Damask Room, originally the dining room, is now used as the refreshment center for various social events and for club meetings held at the Manor. All the furnishings are original and the handsome chairs are from the original set used by Grant. The thickness and quality of the wood of the doors is outstanding. The meals were prepared on a large iron and brick stove in the kitchen below and were sent on the dumb waiter to the butler's pantry to be served.

### **Grant Bedrooms**

The southwest corner of the house is the master bedroom used by Mrs. Grant when she and her husband were guests at the Galigher home; this bedroom is now being restored. The southeast bed chamber was assigned to Mr. Grant after the reception. The ceiling's original decorations remain as seen by Grant. Many furnishings have

been carefully chosen to create an authentic setting. The richly carved bedstead of solid walnut is the actual bed used by Grant during his visit.

#### **Northeast Bedroom**

The furnishings of this room are of exquisite antique cherry. The bedroom is papered in blue with silver designs from the same source as the Library paper.

#### **Museum**

On the fourth floor is the museum which displays features of the Civil War, American Indian Arts, and the implements and apparel of the Victorian Period.

Just above the museum is the cupola, the fifth story, when in the early years of its occupancy, the excellent views of the city and the rivers could be obtained.

#### **1870 Victorian Kitchen Restored**

The kitchen was designed by Charles Galigher to accommodate many servants, and its size demonstrates that its function was to prepare savory dinners and party foods for the Galigher's many friends and visitors. The original brick and iron stove was purchased in Cincinnati.

Walnut and oak were used with abundance throughout the kitchen. Thick walnut shelves now hold the heavy Victorian cooking utensils. The most interesting use of walnut may be found in the high dados and the floor with alternating walnut and oak boards. The kitchen furnishings are of sturdy oak pieces created for utility. The lighting was unique. The fixtures are of the Gas Age, with a hooded kerosene lamp in the center of the room, and bracket lamps on the side walls. The original fixtures are now wired.

#### **Award of Merit (November 1962)**

Dr. Clyde C. Walton, executive director of the Illinois State Historical Society presented an award to Mrs. Albert Dudley, director of the Cairo Historical Association. This award was one of only three presented in the state. It reads, "The Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois, presents this award of merit to the Cairo Historical Association for long continued interest in our Illinois heritage, for outstanding service, constant fidelity and active encouragement of the educational aims of the society, and in a broad sense for support of the historical ideals of our volunteer and independent union of America". (Signed) President Doris P. Leonard."



## **CAIRO'S FIRE DEPARTMENT**

**By JUDY DUNKER**

Cairo, Illinois, has maintained a fire department since the year 1860, when the city formed its first organization. This began with a group of volunteers consisting of different companies called the "Arabs", "Rough and Readies", "Hibernian", "Deltas", and the "Anchors". There was much rivalry between these companies.

Out of the five companies, the "Arabs" were the best equipped. They operated with one steam engine, the "Jack Winters" named af-



ter a former mayor of Cairo, a hook and ladder wagon, and one small hand pump which can still be seen today. Also, when the "Arabs" were on duty they answered calls to Mound City and Anna, Illinois, besides the ones in town. This particular company was located in the building which is now occupied by the Cairo Water Company.

The other departments, which were not as well equipped, were situated throughout various points of the city. The "Rough and Readies" were located at 710 Washington Ave., which is now the present No. 1 Fire Station; the "Hibernian" company headquarters were at 1301 Washington Ave., which is now used as an office for Dr. Chambliss; the "Deltas" station was at 1711 Commercial Ave., where the Auxiliary Fire Department is now located; and the "Anchors" building is now a two-story frame residence.

The present Fire Department had its early beginnings in October 1893, and it was located at 1109 Commercial Ave. This early branch of the department consisted of five men equipped with two horses and a wagon, which was purchased from Chicago, Ill.

In 1901 the department then moved to 1711 Commercial Ave., and by September of 1901, another department was organized. This group, consisting of five men and a horse-drawn wagon, made its location at the present No. 1 Fire Station on Washington Ave. This station was known at that time to be Fire Department No. II. Then, in 1910 the Fire Station No III at 3100 Sycamore was built and equipped. It also had five firemen with two horses and a wagon.

In 1916 the Fire Department was reduced to two stations and then purchased its first motorized piece of equipment. This equipment was a Robinson truck with a 1000 gallon pumper. It was put to use in the Fire Station No I and a few months later a Studebaker hose truck was purchased.

In 1917 the No. II Station was given a Briscoe hose truck costing \$800. By this time, nineteen men occupied both stations.

Then, in September 1925, the first American La France truck was purchased to Fire Station No. I and later in 1928, another one was purchased for the other station. Today these trucks can be located in Wyatt, Mo, and Pulaski, Ill. Another truck called the Mack "Quad", was purchased in the year 1944 and is now being used in Cairo. This truck, located at Fire Department No. I, consists of water, a pump, hose, and ladders. The Mack "Triple Combination", which was brought here in 1946, is one of the fire engines now being used. This Mack truck, which consists of water, a pump and hose, is in use at Fire Department No. II at 31st and Sycamore.

The latest piece of equipment purchased was the American La France in 1960. This new engine is also located at No. II Fire Department.

Today, the Cairo Fire Department is modern and efficient. These two stations, Fire Departments No. I and No. II, besides the Auxiliary Fire Department, have played a very important part in this city. Number One station on Washington Avenue consists of a two-story brick building, the first floor devoted to housing equipment and the second floor furnishing living accommodations for the firemen. This station has been in use since 1900 and is well located to protect property in the central business district.

The Number Two Station at 31st and Sycamore, is also a two-story brick building. It has been in use since 1909 and is well located to protect the adjoining industrial area and the uptown residential district.

Now, operating at Fire Station No. 1 is one Quad truck loaded with 2,500 ft. of 2½" fire hose, 250 gallon booster water tank, ¾" booster hose with 300 ft. in length, and 300 ft. of ladders, ranging in length from 8 to 50 ft. They also have numerous small tools such as axes, hammers, wrenches, crowbars, and others that are necessary. Besides this truck, this station is equipped with the Emergency Unit which contains resuscitators, cutting torch, mobile light appliance, and other small tools used in rescue work.

The Auxiliary Fire Department, another arm of the fire department, found its beginning in 1941 when J. W. Mason became Fire Chief of the Cairo Fire Department. The members of this organization were trained under the supervision of the regular fire department and Chief Mason.

In April, 1943, the Auxiliary Department was equipped with two trucks and two 500 gallon trailer pumps. Through the efforts of Chief Mason, this Auxiliary Department was located at 1711 Commercial Ave.



## LUMBER—A MEMENTO TO CAIRO'S HISTORY

By MARY JANE DUNKER

### Introduction

In 1890, Cairo was one of the great lumber centers and distributing points in the United States. Previous to that time, it had but two wholesale dealers. No lumber was yarded here, and the hundreds of mills south and west looked to St. Louis as their only market. With all the forests around Cairo, and her location at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, it was soon realized that Cairo would be the perfect spot for lumber industries.

Once brought to the attention of lumbermen, firm after firm sought location here; and in a short time Cairo had become one of the leading lumber centers of the country. It was to reach a high point in our city in later years.

### Operation

Forests were plentiful within the radius of 50 to 75 miles of Cairo. The logs were cut there and delivered to the mill by river. The logs were loaded on the barges and delivered to the mill for sawmilling and veneering.

When the logs were lifted to the mill, they were rolled off the carriage and went to the dragsaw at which point they were cut into lengths required for the manufacture of the products on order.

After they had been cut, the bark was removed from the veneer logs in preparation to cut the veneer.

Both the lumber and the veneer products were then taken to the lumber and veneer yards for air drying. There the lumber required 90-100 days to dry to make it ready for the manufacture into products. The veneer, being much thinner, required only four to ten days air drying, according to the weather conditions.

When it had dried, it was ready for movement to the mill to be cut to size into the manufactured product.

There were many lumber companies in Cairo during the early 1900's, and as the raw materials were becoming short, some of the companies were moving to the south where the timber supply was adequate.

Had these companies practiced reforestation as is done now, the timber supply in this area would have been sufficient for operations of lumber plants as they were during earlier times.

### **Important Lumber Companies**

The Weis-Peterson Box Company, an Iowa Corporation, came to Cairo in 1896. J. P. Peterson was the founder. In 1917 it became an Illinois Corporation, and the name was changed to Peterson-Miller Box Company. J. W. Peterson, the son of J. P., succeeded his father in 1929.

This company, being privately owned, employed 200 to 250 men. They were extensive manufacturers of whitewood cold storage, sawed and veneer egg cases, box shooks, and beer boxes. Their location was at North Cairo. In fact, the Weis-Peterson Box Company produced all small package box shooks with the exception of lock corner boxes.

The Singer Manufacturing Company, who also operated great manufacturing establishments in Scotland, New Jersey, Indiana, and Canada, established a wood working factory in Cairo in 1881. The enterprise had proved in all ways so satisfactory to the company that the company decided to make this point its main place for supply of wood materials in the rough to be used in the manufacture of the famous Singer Sewing Machines.

The buildings occupied the space between Thirty-fifth and Thirty-eighth, Commercial Avenue and Sycamore streets, and it extended to the Ohio River, where it had a logging and wharfage front. This company gave employment to 300 hands the year round (during its peak, 1200 employees), and millions of feet of Mahogany, Walnut, Maple, Oak and Gum were converted into veneer table tops and bands.

The Chicago Mill and Lumber Company operated a colossal plant between Sycamore and Ohio Levee Streets. With their employment of 700 to 800 men and boys, they manufactured lumber, veneer, box shooks, washboard material, sail stock, and kindred articles.

A leading concern in its line and one that took an active and highly effective hand in the "Gateway City's" commercial expansion, was Kelly Brothers Lumber Company, located on Commercial Avenue. With the large planing mills and lumber yards, they manufactured window sash and doors, blinds, and other building materials, and were dealers in these products. They also sold Rubberoid roofing, along with paints, oils, glass, and hardware. Kelly Brothers could have furnished a home!

Few business firms in the City of Cairo were better known to the general public throughout the entire country than the Vehicle Supply Company, whose products traversed the most remote section and were handled in nearly all the large cities. They were manufacturers of wagons, buggy and agricultural woodwork, double trees, single trees and neck yokes, ironclad and unironed, wagon and buggy material, finished or in the rough. Their large plant, including factory, warehouses, lumber yard and offices were located at 3rd and Jefferson streets with mills at Wickliffe, Ky.

Though only established in 1904 at Cairo, this business grew to such large proportions and their trade so wonderfully increased that they thought it would later be necessary to find a new, larger location.

### **Conclusion**

The above lumber centers were only a few of the many great lumber industries in Cairo.

Today most of the veneer and box industries have relocated closer to timber supply. Demands have changed, and paper boxes are taking the place of the wooden box; but the memory of large lumber and veneer box operations still remains in the hearts and minds of those who knew them.



## **THE STREET THAT NEVER SLEPT**

**By PATTI DUDLEY**

### **Introduction**

I will try to review for you in this essay a bit of the excitement, glamour, intense activity, great movement of traffic, and the luxury for the times, of Ohio Street in Cairo during the middle 1800's and early 1900's.

A review of Ohio Street, known from Cincinnati to New Orleans, will in some measure also give you a small glimpse of the gracious, to a great extent formal, but easy-going type of living found in the community at this time. This grace and charm can still be felt in sections of the city, and the attitudes of the people of Cairo today.

### **Halliday Hotel**

The "Halliday" was one of the main buildings on Ohio Street. There was a saying that everything around the Hotel was built to compliment it. The Hotel was first opened in January 1859 under the name of the St. Charles Hotel. The Hotel changed hands only two or three times during its existence. In 1880 the Halliday brothers bought the Hotel. They completely redecorated the entire building, creating a friendly and luxurious attitude throughout. The rooms were large and tastefully decorated to create a home-like atmosphere, and had sitting rooms and baths, which was unusual in Hotels during this period. The Hotel had been closed during the alterations, and was reopened in July of 1881 as one of the finest in this part of the country.

The "Blue Room" was decorated with blue walls and blue drapes. This room was a delightful place for small meetings with service equal to that in the main dining room.

The Main Dining Room, opening off the large lobby, had tables set with fine damask cloths and napkins, the finest china, crystal and silverware. The waiters were well trained Negroes who were very proud of the excellent service they gave patrons of the Hotel. All of the waiters wore white coats, dark trousers, and the required linens necessary for their trade. The Headwaiter at the Halliday was Alonzo Locke. Everyone up and down the river knew Alonzo Locke, and made it a point to stay at the Halliday whenever they could be



served by him. Just before the Halliday burned, in the early 1940's, Alonzo moved to Memphis and went on to gain an even better reputation as Headwaiter at one of the establishments there.

In the Bar, which could be entered from the river side or through the Hotel Lobby, General Grant sat on only one particular bar stool where he could look out on the river. To honor him, the Bar was named the Grant Bar. Also a white circle was painted on the floor around his favorite bar stool, and a star on the bar top. The bar itself was of hand carved, fine grained, solid mahogany.

There was also a Barbershop in the Hotel. Many of the people of Cairo went to get their hair cut there by "Buck," a Negro barber. One of our neighbors, a most gracious person, Mrs. Fredrick Grieve, got her first haircut there as a child.

Across the street on the river side, there was a park for the pleasure of the Hotel guests and the people of Cairo. One went up a few steps over the Levee wall into the park. Here were steps down to the river where there was a boat house with many pleasure boats. The entrance to the park was guarded by a pair of huge iron eagles, each perched on an iron ball.

There is a story that the Hotel was a part of the underground system of transporting slaves. Boats from the South would drop slaves off at this point, where they were hidden in dungeons beneath the Hotel until they could be taken by north-bound boats up river. During the Civil War, these dungeons were used to keep prisoners.

### **Springfield Block**

The section between Sixth Street and Eighth Street was called the "Springfield Block." The main building on this block was the City National Bank of Cairo, erected by Governor Matteson and opened on February 7, 1855. The second and third floors were occupied by distinguished Army Officers during the War. In 1861 General Grant occupied the second floor on the North side of the building.

There was also a room reserved for the first Public Library, however, there was only one shelf of books.

Further down the street was the Enterprise (Savings) Bank of Cairo. This bank was opened on March 3, 1869. These two banks merged in January of 1907 and became the First Bank and Trust Company, which is presently operating on the corner of Eighth Street at Washington Avenue.

### **Gladhand Saloon**

This saloon was typical of the times. The owner was John Ford, and he carried a pistol at all times to keep order of a sort among his customers. As it was told to me by a lifetime resident of Cairo who was there, when the customers did not listen to Mr. Ford, he simply "Drew his pistol and went Bang!" accounting for the four notches on it.

Ohio Street was truly typical of a river town, and perhaps, in some respects, retains some of the less violent atmosphere of the early days.

### **The Blue Front Restaurant**

The Blue Front Restaurant was named this simply because they painted the front blue. Mr. Echenberger, the owner, threw the key into the river on the day he opened his restaurant for business, for he said, "Anyone is welcome at any time, day or night, in my restaurant." Its reputation was known for miles around and continued to draw customers even when moved to Commercial Avenue until just a few years ago when the building burned down.

### **The Planters Hotel**

The fact to be most remembered about this Hotel was its beautiful lace ironwork. This ironwork was put any and all places on the building where it would fit. Although it was not in operation as long as the Halliday Hotel, it was considered quite elegant in its day.

### **The Reed Foundry**

Mr. J. B. Reed originally had his foundry in St. Louis. When he realized that Cairo was becoming a thriving city with both boat and rail shipping passing through it, he moved his business here. He had just become well established when the Civil War started, and he went into the business of iron-cladding the gunboats. This business was run by the same family at its original site until late 1940's or early 1950's. The original Mr. Reed built a large brick home typical of the period, beautifully finished with the finest woods, bricks and materials on 20th Street, which has just recently been torn down.

### **Train Depots**

There were five railways in Cairo; the Big Four, the Illinois Central, Gulf, Mobile and Ohio, Missouri Pacific, and Baltimore and Ohio. One of the depots was on Second and Commercial Avenues for the Big Four. The other was in front of the Halliday Hotel where the remaining trains came through. If you were going to a nearby town, you would go to the red brick station on Washington Avenue where the Iron Mountain train came in. Ohio Street was built initially for railway traffic, but was paved with bricks on one side to accomodate bugies and wagons.

### **Pot Pourri**

Completing the picture of Ohio Street one could find all the business necessary to a Commercial center such as Cairo was. This included Livery Stables, Grain storage bins, retail grocers, wholesale produce companies, whiskey warehouses, hardware companies, boat stores, other banks, a theatre, restaurants, and additional hotels.

### **Conclusion**

The people of that day called Ohio Street the "Street That Never Slept." Many of the boats would be passing through at the wee hours of the morning and would stop at Cairo to replenish their supplies. Any time during the night or day one could go down to the Ohio Street and find activity and Cairo's famous "Southern Hospitality."

Ohio Street was indeed a wonderful place, and lives today in the hearts of many who were a part of its life. It was a cross-road of rivers and rails and took its place in history as part of one of the most thriving cities along the river.



## **GROWTH OF A CITY—HOW IT WAS MADE POSSIBLE**

**By PATTY ELIAS**

The name Halliday is synonymous in Cairo, Illinois, with progress and enterprise.

The family consisted of five brothers and three sisters of which I shall talk about the brothers. They were: Captain William P. Halliday

—master mind of the brothers, Major E. W. Halliday, Thomas Halliday, Henry L. Halliday, and Samuel B. Halliday.

Since these brothers came to Cairo around the time of the Civil War, there were numerous business opportunities; and they took advantage of them.

Henry L. Halliday along with his four brothers established the H. L. Halliday Milling Company in 1865, but his brothers left the business and he reorganized it in 1891. This company had a milling capacity of 800 barrels of flour per day which was sold throughout the south and exported to the West Indies and Europe. Along with the Milling Company, Henry Halliday erected the H. L. Halliday Elevator at Ohio Levee and Second Street. This elevator had a capacity of half a million bushels.

The brothers together founded the Cairo Electric Street Railway Company, the Cairo Electric Light and Power Company, the Cairo City Coal Company, and the Ice Plant. The street car system had been enjoyed in Cairo since 1891. The cars ran from one end of town to the other, with fare for the round trip only five cents. The power plant furnished the motive power for the street cars, and also for shops, printing presses, small manufacturers, hotels, and private homes. This plant was one of the best equipped in the state. Hallidayboro, the name of their coal mines, was located near Du Quoin, Illinois; but their office was in Cairo on Ninth and Washington Ave., where the Cairo Hotel was. There was also an artesian well built by the brothers on Ninth Street to be used in regard to the coal. (This has long been capped over.)

Other enterprises included the H. H. Halliday Sand and Gravel Company which is still engaged in pumping sand from the Ohio River for building purposes. The material is shipped in large quantities to dealers in the surrounding area.

The Carey-Halliday Lumber Company had plant and yards extending from Sycamore Street to the Ohio River, on which veneer and planing mills, and a large box factory were located.

The Halliday brothers, excluding Henry L., also had a part in the banking of Cairo. They founded the City Bank of Cairo, later known as the City National Bank, and the Enterprise Savings Bank, which was the first exclusive savings institution organized in Southern Illinois. These two banks were merged in January, 1907, and became the First Bank and Trust Company, which up until a few years ago belonged to the Halliday family.

Another great credit to Cairo was the magnificent Halliday Hotel. This hotel was on a par with the best hotels in cities like St. Louis and Chicago. Admirably located, apart from other buildings. It afforded at one glance a view of three states and of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers at their point of meeting to form the mightiest waterway of the continent.

William Parker Halliday, master mind of the brothers, acquired the title Captain from his early adventures on the Ohio River. Having come to Cairo before the war, Capt. Halliday saw multiple opportunities which he ameliorated. Success and prosperity were now growing beyond his greatest expectations.

Even though Capt. Halliday did much for the poor of the community without ostentation or trumpet blowing, he was known to be a vain man. One example of this was when he died of cancer, September 22, 1899. Capt. Halliday wanted the people to remember him as

a distinguished looking man. He requested that his casket be sealed and a huge portrait of himself placed by it. After his funeral, this picture was given to the Cairo Public Library where it is now seen hanging at the head of the staircase.

But this is not where William P. Halliday ends, in 1906 his daughter, Mary Halliday and the Halliday family presented to the City of Cairo the Hower in memory of her father.

Considered one of the ten best nudes in America, this statue by George Grey Barnard can be seen standing in Halliday Park near the site of the original office.



## THE HISTORY OF CAIRO, ILLINOIS

By MONICA HAFFLY

At the southern tip of Illinois, in Alexander county, two of America's mightiest rivers, the Mississippi and the Ohio meet. Here stands Cairo, the picturesque, interesting and historic city.

The site of Cairo was first visited by French explorers in 1673. In the summer of 1702 a tannery was set up by Charles Juchereau de St. Denys, and at the same time a fort was built and named Va Bache. These were established about five miles north of the present site of Cairo.

There was an unidentified disease in 1703 which destroyed the expedition, and in 1704 Va Bache was abandoned.

Although Alexander County was established March 1819, during the period from 1818 to 1836 Cairo, or what had been planned to be Cairo, was a mere wood-yard, at which the steamboats would land to take on wood for their furnace fires. Besides these, there were trading boats, which, while trading very little at the point, found it a convenient place to stop for a time.

Cairo was not settled until 1837, after an endeavor in 1817 by John C. Comegys to found a city, and when Comegys died, with him died the proposed city.

Cairo was incorporated in 1857 but did not adopt the commission form of government until 1919. December, 1853, may be said to mark the beginning of contemporary Cairo.

Perhaps the most commonly known facts about Cairo were the low elevation of the town's site, and about the Ohio and Mississippi rivers causing many floods. The highest known floods of Cairo were: the flood of 1844 when only the cross levee constructed by Mr. Miles A. Gilbert helped Cairo withstand the water. The flood of 1849 where the water first poured through the old break in the Mississippi levee till the water inside the levees became higher than the Ohio river, and finally reached such a height to overflow the Ohio levee in different places. The floods of 1858 and 1862 when the temporary levee did, in the year 1858, give way, and the city was submerged to an average of twelve feet, and whereas, the rivers did, in the year of 1862, rise to a height of fourteen inches above the levees, and the city property was greatly endangered.



During the Civil War troops were sent to Cairo eleven days after the firing of the first shots in April, 1861. Cairo became a military camp, Fort Defiance, securing the confluence to the Union cause. A few hours delay and the Confederates encamped at Columbus, Kentucky, might well have invaded Cairo and changed the course of the outcome of the War.

The City Bank of Cairo was organized in the year of 1858 under the General Banking law of the state. And the First National Bank of Cairo was organized on the 24th day of July, 1863, under the National Banking Act of February 25, 1863. The bank continued to do business for many years, but its experience was somewhat varied. The First Bank and Trust Company of Cairo was organized on the second day of January, 1907, and was the successor of the City National Bank and the Enterprise (savings) Bank that was chartered March, 1869.

The Building and Loan Associations might properly have been called institutions of the city. By means of these associations hundreds of homes have been secured in Cairo.

Besides having many sites to visit and excellent transportation facilities by highways Cairo is served by five railroad lines and is also the year round head of navigation on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. It is the terminus for the main barge lines of these rivers.

Cairo is in the same latitude as Tunis in Africa and only about five degrees north of the latitude of Cairo, Egypt.



## THE GRAIN BUSINESS OF CAIRO

By CLAUDIA HASLAUER

The raising of grain was probably started centuries ago by the Indians in the planting of corn, which was then called maize. The location of this planting may have been on the Sikeston ridge-south. However, the commercial importance of Cairo and grain probably was given the most emphasis when the Illinois Central completed their line from Chicago to Cairo.

This line came through the main grain belt of the state of Illinois. In other words, it came through the flat prairie areas that were very rich in top soil and easy to cultivate. Therefore, the event of the railroad coming to Cairo enabled the grain merchant to bring his grain in by rail to Cairo, and have it sacked and loaded on barges or riverboats. This grain was then distributed along the reaches of the lower Mississippi River.

In those days there wasn't any grain that was raised in the south. However, the Illinois Central brought the prime of grain business into Cairo around 1880 and 1890. By the early 1900's there were thirteen elevators that had their facilities in Cairo. There were some oats and grain raised near here; however, the greatest source of oats was many miles north of Cairo. The fact that North and South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, and Northern Illinois poured tremendous amounts of grain through the Cairo gateway made the handling of oats at Cairo the chief industry at one time.

These oats were put into what we call a sulfur bin. The raw sul-

fur was burned and caused the oats that were light brown or even stained by weather to turn to a snowy white color. These sulfur bins and the smoke that went through these oats did not harm the feed value of the oats. That was the first tremendous movement of grain through the Cairo Gateway. Gateway—meaning that the railroads converged at Cairo and went across the Ohio River by the Illinois Central Bridge.

These oats were distributed throughout the Southeast. Also at Cairo there was a crossing that was done by boat. This was the means of getting trains across the river; and then in turn, these trains distributed the grain that was handled at Cairo to the Southwest. However, with the advent of the building of the Missouri Pacific Bridge at Thebes, Illinois, the ferry was discontinued.

At one time Cairo was the largest oat center in the world. This was because the South using great numbers of mules to cultivate cotton, needed oats to feed them. Cairo, being the nearest distribution point, was chosen as the place of purchase.

At one time a Mr. Harry Halliday of Cairo cornered the oat market—something that is almost impossible to do since that time. He owned all of the oats produced in the United States; either in actual product on hand, or he bought all of the futures in Chicago. When one controls a commodity, one has tremendous power, and makes millions of dollars. However, instead of taking his profits and getting out of the market, he stayed with the market; and finally, through his speculations in the grain market, Mr. Halliday died a pauper.

At this time some corn and wheat were raised in this area. For example, there were two flour mills in Cairo. These flour mills bought the local wheat and turned it into bread.

Why did Cairo suddenly seem to disappear from the grain market? With the arrival of gasoline in tractors, the South got away from the use of mules; and since then, the use of oats in the South has strictly been for feed of race horses and show cattle. Therefore, the movement into the southeast and southwest has practically been depleted. The importance of Cairo as an oat center, naturally diminished, and the elevators were unable to convert their facilities to other means due to the fact that practically all of Southeast Missouri and Southern Illinois was still in the woods at that time. There was no local grain grown. Therefore, most of the elevators either burned or went out of business.

Cairo began to become an important center for grain in the early 1950's. The old grain elevators at Cairo had failed to convert their unloading facilities to unload trucks in an efficient manner. With the appearance of the big combines and trucks we have today, Cairo was by-passed with grain. Also, as the importance of Cairo as a grain center decreased, the people in the grain business either retired or transferred their operations to other places. With the occurrence of the large combines and tractors, the clearing of land in Southern Illinois, Southeast Missouri, and Kentucky started in the 1940's. Practically every tillable acre of land had been cleared in this area. Therefore, there were tremendous quantities of grain raised that had to be moved to market.

When this transition took over from movement of grain by wagon and rail to trucks, the elevators converted their facilities so they could unload trucks quickly. Another important factor in the resurgence of Cairo as a grain center was that the methods of transportation had

changed. Barges came into the picture. Barge rates were about one-half of what rail rates were. Therefore, the elevators that were not on the river and could not load barges were handicapped.

With the development of barge loading at Cairo; land being cleared; the use of tractors and huge combines; the elevators at Cairo converting to unloading facilities so they could rapidly unload trucks and put the grain into barges or box cars; and the advent of large storage capacities added; Cairo came into its own as a grain center.



## MORE THAN 100 YEARS IN EDUCATION

By PAMELA HENRY

Built for the children of the township, Cairo's first schools were considered modern at that time. As the population grew, the need for new and better schools became evident. Now, more than 100 years later, the citizens are still trying to give their children the best in education.

From 1836 to 1842, Cairo, no doubt, had one or two private schools, although there are no records of them today. The first public school was built in 1854, however, and since then Cairo has had many noted schools.

In 1863 the Catholics built an \$8,000 "Female Academy of the Sisters of Loretto." Wrecked by a storm, it had to be rebuilt and was unable to hold classes until October, 1864. Under the superintendency of Mother Elizabeth Hayden, a Sister of Bishop Spaulding, the academy flourished, and many daughters of prominent Cairo families were educated here. The school burned about 1880 and was rebuilt and greatly improved but was discontinued some years later.

The German population also built a private school in 1863. This school was for the purpose of teaching German without religious bias and was called the "Frei Deutsch Schule." This \$4,500 school had about 75 pupils and was maintained by private subscriptions.

Among the largest contributors were A. B. Safford and William Schutter.

On September 1, 1863, the first public school in Cairo opened. This was a frame building consisting of one room. Its first teacher was Charles T. Lind, who was required by contract to, not only teach, but to provide the fuel for the school. Later this building was used for the education of Cairo's Negro population.

In 1864 the first high school was built. It was a three story brick building and was considered a great improvement over the first public school building. Later this school was converted into a grade school, Douglas Elementary, and had remained a grade school until this present school year (1965 to 1966).

During the same year, a two story frame building, consisting of four rooms, was erected for the Negro children. This dual school system was a result of the Negro sentiment toward the White people; they were quite sensitive on the pigment points. However, their at-

titude changed during the 1880's. They are said to have marched on the white schools; but they caused nothing more serious than a great annoyance and interruption to the schools.

Since these two schools were built, the Cairo school district has built other schools to accommodate the population of Cairo. For the white population, Safford, 1867; Lincoln, 1892; Elmwood, 1908; Cairo High, 1926; and Cairo Junior High, 1949 were built. The Negro schools were: Washington Elementary, 1872; Washington Junior High, 1941; Bruce Elementary, 1900; Sumner High, 1926; and Garrison Elementary 1941.

In June of 1965, the citizens of Cairo passed a referendum for new schools. This referendum calls for three schools to replace the ten schools mentioned above. It will relinquish the dual education system. According to this referendum, eight additional classrooms, a large cafeteria, and a multi-purpose room will be added to the present Washington Junior High School. A new elementary school—consisting of 18 classrooms, a cafeteria, and a multi-purpose room—will be built on the lots between 31st and 33rd Streets.

An addition connecting the present Cairo High School and Cairo Junior High will also be built; this will house all Cairo students in grades 7 to 12. Garrison Elementary will be retained for use as administrative offices and maintenance shops; Sumner High School will be retained for future use as a vocational school for students.

This referendum is a fine example of the progress that has been made in the schools of Cairo; and as long as there are children in the city of Cairo, the citizens will continue to make progress in the educational system.



## THE REBIRTH OF A CHURCH

By CYNTHIA HENSHAW

The Protestant Episcopal Church of Cairo, Illinois, was originally named Christ Church and located on Fourteenth Street.

While the Civil War raged on, a church petition was presented to change the church's name to the Church of the Redeemer. After and during the Civil War, the church was used as a hospital for Union soldiers, as Cairo was headquarters for General Grant.

The church was relocated to Sixth Street on September 28th, 1886, where ground was broken. On December 7, 1886, the corner-stone was laid.

The architecture was of rich, Gothic design. The construction was of warm, brown sandstone; this was obtained from Makanda, Illinois.

Prize possessions in the church included an organ purchased at the World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri. This organ won a gold medal for tone, and for being a Johnston tractor-action organ. Priest vestments of red brocade silk, hand embroidered by nuns in Belgium were also purchased at the World's Fair. Other valuable articles included altar linens imported from Belgium, imported nativity figurines from Germany, large life-size crucifix, and stained glass windows depicting different events in our Lord's life.



All these prize possessions were present in the church on a cold, dreary Saturday morning, the seventh of November in 1953. Father Stone arose to say prayers, when he pulled the shade up and opened the window, flames were shooting upward into his face.

He could not believe his eyes, the church was on fire.

The interior of the church was gutted along with most of the exterior. Lost in the fire was the organ, vestments, altar linens, and the large crucifix.

The first thing Father Stone did was to form a building committee which included the vestry. The next step was to get an architect and a contractor. The architect was Gale Henderson of St. Louis, Missouri the contractor was Kenneth Evans, also of St. Louis. Mr. Evans worked side by side with the vestry.

The members of the parish signed pledge cards stating how much they would donate for one hundred and fifty weeks. The church had to borrow money from the bank, and for collateral they used the pledge cards.

With the money obtained from the bank, they paid off the contractor. The loan from the bank was repaid in a year and a half.

The new church's design is Tudor-Gothic. The total cost of rebuilding and completely refurnishing the church, installing stained glass windows, organ and air-conditioning is estimated at well over \$100,000.00.

On a beautiful Monday morning, the twenty-third of June in 1958, the Church of the Redeemer was consecrated by Bishop Clough, presiding Bishop of Springfield.

The bell which rang out to signify the consecration was once a prized possession on the James Montgomery, that was used as a troop transport to carry soldiers to the Battle of Belmont. When the boat was sunk in 1861, Captain Halliday secured the bell for the church which was being remodeled and enlarged, partly through the contributions of soldiers stationed at Cairo in the first year of the Civil War. The church was still on Fourteenth Street.

During the fire, this bell was removed and stored until the new church could be built. It is now installed in the belfrey.



## TWO OUTSTANDING CAIRO CITIZENS

By JOHN HILBOLDT

Two of Southern Illinois' most prominent and most distinguished lawyers were Judge William H. Green and his son Reed Green. Their family's ancestors are listed among the first settlers of Virginia and pioneers of Kentucky. The family can be traced back to an aunt of George Washington, and William H. Green's mother was related to the celebrated pioneer and Indian fighter, Simon Kenton.

William H. Green moved to the city of Cairo in 1863. Having been admitted to the bar in 1852, he formed a law partnership with William B. Gilbert of Cairo, setting up their offices in the same building General U. S. Grant had used as Civil War headquarters. He was the principal council for the Illinois Central Railroad, and in 1865 he was elected Circuit Judge for three years. His political career also included two terms in the State House of Representatives during which he was

chairman of the Judiciary Commission. After four years in the popular branch he was elected to the State Senate for two years. The Democratic Party was his chosen political faith, and he was a delegate to the National Democratic convention six times. Judge Green also served as a member of the State Board of Education for more than thirty-five years.

After moving to Cairo, Judge Green erected an elegant Greek Colonial home which was designed by J. C. Cochrane who was the architect of the first Capitol Building of the State of Illinois. Being constructed of hickory carried to the city by flatboats, the interior of the house contains walnut woodwork, indoor shutters, hardwood floors, and an inlaid wooden floor in the library.

The home contains a kitchen and dining room in the basement; music room, formal dining room, and huge library on the first floor; and four bedrooms on the second floor.

One of the unusual characteristics of the home is the ceiling in the library which is metal that has been expertly stained to appear to be natural wood. The home has recently been sold and reworked; and being so carefully constructed it should continue to give years of comfort to its owners.

Mr. W. H. Green's son, Reed, was born on September 22, 1865. He grew to manhood in Cairo and became one of Alexander county's most prominent and highly respected citizens. He was educated in Cairo schools, Southern Illinois Normal University, and Wesleyan Law School in Bloomington. He read law in his father's office and other Southern Illinois law offices; he was admitted to the bar in 1886. As his father had been, he was interested in politics and was elected to the House in 1888 and again in 1890. In 1892 he was elected to the Senate for four years and retired as an office holder with a "deep and keen interest in fighting for the principles and promoting of the Democratic Party."

After his father's death in 1902, Reed Green set up his own offices where "he developed a magnetic eloquence, an extensive acquaintance throughout the county and a sound legal foundation of being one of the ablest jury lawyers in this section, to which he added an increasing knowledge or corporation law which established him firmly in that sphere of legal practice. One of Mr. Green's strongest wishes was for a jury reform bill which he felt a sincere desire for and which was passed after his death. He was a member of the Cairo Bridge Commission and was instrumental in building the two bridges which cross the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers at the southern tip of Illinois. Active in various civic activities, he was attorney for a number of insurance and railroad companies, legal advisor to business firms, director of many Cairo enterprises, and director of the Cairo Association of Commerce.

When the First Bank and Trust Company was organized in 1907, he was named a Director and Vice President, and in 1917 he was named president. As his father was, he was deeply interested in the school system and was a member of the Cairo Board of Education. He succeeded his father in 1902 as a member of the Cairo Public Library Board on which he served until his death in 1937.

Judge William H. Green and Reed Green were two outstanding citizens of Cairo, Alexander County, and Southern Illinois. The works they performed during their lives have lived after them and will continue to show how their farsighted judgment has benefited the area at the tip of Illinois.

Note: The beautiful Victorian Green home is at 603 Walnut and is now the home of Mr and Mrs. Russell Turner.

# "THE DAY HAS COME! ! THE OPERA HOUSE OPENS TONIGHT"

By JOHN HILBOLDT

The Cairo Opera House, planned by I. B. McEifatrack & Son of Louisville, Kentucky, was begun on the 20th of September 1881 after bids had been received from many large cities all over the country. The building was completed two months later with large store rooms in the front which had been suggested by Captain Thomas W. Shields of Cairo who was part owner of the building. The walls, considered the strongest in the city, were built on foundations eight feet wide at the base; and in construction 900,000 bricks were used with the building measuring 100 feet long, 65 feet wide, and 85 feet high.

The seating capacity was about 1500; the parquet circle furnished room for about 600, the dress circle 300, the gallery 500, and each of the 4 boxes 30. The floor slanted in such a way that the stage could be seen clearly from any point in the building. The stage, 35 feet by 40 feet by 55 feet, was at the south end of the building with dressing rooms on each side and underneath. The circular rows of chairs, which were made specially by the Chicago Store Stool Company, had seats which folded up when not in use; and when down they provided a convenient hatrack underneath for gentlemen's hats.

The ornamental columns, ginger bread work, and woodwork were all prepared on the grounds and illustrated a rare artistic skill. There were busts of Milton and Shakespeare over the boxes and beautiful, light fresco paintings of the latest style on the walls, which was in great contrast to the large theatres of the east that were usually dark and gloomy. The paintings gave every part of the building a bright, cheerful appearance.

The gas lighting equipment of the Opera House was considered the most perfect of its kind in the country. The lovely chandeliers of Cairo who was part owner of the building. The walls, considered The huge 60-jet chandelier had an elegant porcelain reflector which threw almost blinding light rays upon every person in the audience, after the gas was instantly turned on by electricity.

The carpeting was crimson with small black figures, and for increased quietness, the stairways were covered with cocoa matting. The window and box curtains were also crimson with crimson colored velvet covering the balustrades and trimmed with gilt.

The acoustical properties, which are most important of all in a theatre, were perfect as everything else in the building. All sounds, even whispers, could be heard distinctly and clearly in all parts of the auditorium, and in this area the Opera House was considered superior.

The steam heating system consisted of beautiful heaters placed where they were suitable to give the best possible warmth. There was no danger of fire since stoves had been replaced by the newer steam pipes and radiators.

The stage machinery was the newest and latest improved of the time with the most complete scenery sets available. The stage was dominated by the exquisite drop curtain given to the Opera House by the citizens of Cairo. The scene was from a royal castle with a balcony in the left hand corner containing tile floors and low fancy railings. Blending into the background was a river and mountain range making a "beautiful perspective view." Most curtains in that time

were hung so as to roll up; but the Opera House curtain was hung in a way that it would slide up, and it did it with hardly any noise.

Many plays were performed there including: *Mascotte*, the first program starring Fay Templeton; *Hamlet* and *Virginius*, starring a "great tragedian," Blake; *Ben Hur*; *The Wanderer*; *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and Irving Berlin's *Music Box Revue*, the last production.

Unfortunately the Cairo Opera House was destroyed by fire on February 6, 1947, and the era of great productions and prominent actors faded into the past. It was often boasted by citizens that the stage could hold the largest company of performers in the country. This was never disproved in its 58 years. And as a Chicago gentleman who had traveled and visited many amusement houses in the United States stated, "It was especially a credit to the city of Cairo and a lasting monument to the public spirit of those of her good citizens who have contributed so liberally of their time and means toward it."



## THE GREAT RACE FOR CAIRO

By STEVE HOPKINS

On the twelfth day of April of the year 1861, Fort Sumpter was fired upon and on the following day the fort was surrendered. This event marked the beginning of the War Between the States.

Since war was definitely apparent to both sides, the North and the South, they each began to carefully study the geographic features of the border states. Cairo was seen to be a very important point on the division line between the revolting and adhering states. The importance of the position had been spoken of by such men as Charlevoix, General Hamilton of Canada, and General George Rodgers Clark as a great means of defense against foreign invaders.

The two rivers, Mississippi and Ohio, were the roadways of that time for supplies and troops. So it was figured that the side to first get to Cairo would control the rivers and hold an important point in the middle of the great division.

On the fifteenth of April, three days after the first shot at Fort Sumpter, President Lincoln called out the 75,000 three months' old soldiers to report to duty. Governor Richard Yates of Illinois took prompt action after receiving the following telegram from Simon Cameron, Secretary of War:

Washington, April 15, 1861. His Excellency, Richard Yates: Call made on you by tonight for six regiments of militia for immediate service. Simon Cameron, Secretary of War.  
Four days later Governor Yates received another telegram:

Washington, April 19, 1861. Governor Yates:

As soon as enough of your troops is mustered into service, send a Brigadier General with four regiments at or near Grand Cairo. Simon Cameron, Secretary of War.

Governor Yates, upon receiving the latter dispatch, sent a telegram to General Swift asking him to raise as strong a force as possible. Yates asked that this force be ready to march on a moment's notice.



Forty-eight hours after the dispatch was delivered to General Swift the word was given to move out. On the morning of April 21 at eleven o'clock, 595 men left Chicago under the direction of General Swift.

Four groups did not make it to Chicago in time to leave with Swift, but followed him the next day. These forces together consisted of 313 men. So a total of 908 men were sent to Cairo.

This is what is said about the arrival by Mr. A. H. Burley, of Chicago, in his account of "The Cairo Expedition":

April 21, 1861, the expedition started from the Illinois Central Railroad Station (Chicago)—the military train passed unheralded the length of the state and rolled into Cairo to the astonishment of all and the rage of many of its citizens . . . . Knowing the sentiment of the people, the fear was that they would destroy the long, wooden trestle-work across the Big Muddy River, which they could have rendered impassable in an hour by burning it. There was also fear that the Rebels would seize Cairo, as being a point of great strategic importance. It was afterwards learned that Cairo would have been seized in forty-eight hours, had its occupation been delayed . . . . the first armed forces sent out in the West was that sent to Cairo, and it was sent from Chicago.

The Confederates had made their way to Columbus, twenty miles below Cairo and had started to Cairo. The South was to a disadvantage for they were on foot. Had it not been for the Illinois Central the North would not have beaten the Rebels. I quote a few lines from General Clark E. Carr's *The Illini*, in which he tells in his words of the immediate action taken to fortify Cairo.

Governor Yates received a telegram from the Secretary of War requesting him, as soon as enough Illinois troops were mustered in, to send a force to occupy Cairo. He did not wait for troops to be mustered in. In less than forty-eight hours he had General Swift of Chicago flying down upon a special train of Illinois Central Railway, with four batteries of artillery and six companies of infantry, and the most strategic point west of the Alleghanies was safe in our hands. Cairo was from that time forward the central point of all the movements of our armies on the western rivers. The movements for its occupation was not made a day too soon.

Having secured Cairo as their own, the Union started building a permanent base. General Ulysses S. Grant had his headquarters here from September of 1861 until February of 1862. The Naval Headquarters of the Western Flotilla was also set up in Cairo and remained here for the full four years.

On the fourth day of September, 1861, Grant arrived in Cairo. About the sixth or seventh of September, he gathered some men and a few boats, hurried to Paducah, Kentucky, and took possession. Just about eight to ten hours away was a Confederate force of three to four thousand soldiers on their way to Paducah from Columbus. Having seized Cairo enabled the Union to seize Paducah and several other places.

It has been pointed out and should be stressed that if the Union had not had such quick action the Confederates would have seized Cairo. If this had happened there would have been a big difference in the war.

If both sides wanted Cairo so badly, it must have been a very important and strategic place. There, I think the residents of Cairo and the surrounding area should be proud and honored to have a city that played such an important part in the Civil War.

# CAIRO'S RAILROAD EMPIRE

## 1851-1910

By **BARBARA JOHNSTON**

Few people realize how important railroads are to Cairo's history. They played a major role in her beginning, development, and financial success.

Cairo was a perfect spot for a transportation center. Its location was unique, because it is at the exact point where the boundaries of the Official, Southern, and Western Classification Territories meet. Because it was in such a strategical place, many railroad companies came to and through Cairo.

### **Illinois Central Railroad Is First**

The trustees of the Cairo Property wanted to find some way to build up a city at the meeting place of "Father Mississippi" and "La Belle Ohio." Judge Sidney Breese, originator of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, met Mr. Darius Holbrook, a major incorporator of Cairo, at Vandalia in 1835. Mr. Holbrook proposed the plan of the formation of a company to construct a railroad and build the city. So the present city of Cairo and the Illinois Central Railroad were started at the same time and by the same men. The Illinois Central Charter was procured January 16, 1836, and construction began immediately; but all did not go well.

Among the many difficulties and hardships that ensued was the problem of a Mr Dutcher, who was hired by the Illinois Central Railroad Company to build a new levee at Cairo. His tactics were suspicious and justifiably so. In 1854, as the Mississippi rose rapidly, Dutcher made no effort to hasten his work of filling the gaps in the wall. Samuel Taylor, Trustee of the Cairo City Property Trust, was convinced that Dutcher's delay was deliberate, so he hired men to finish the levee in time. Dutcher fled before his treachery became generally known. But the railroad went through and was finished in 1855. Cairo immediately began to prosper.

This railroad company did much for Cairo. In 1858 it established a steamboat line between Cairo and New Orleans. Also from 1887 to 1889, it built the railroad bridge across the Ohio.

### **Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company**

This company was chartered in Alabama in 1848. The road was finished as far as Columbus, Ky., twenty miles south of Cairo. The Mobile and Ohio originally had been designed to extend to the Ohio River near Cairo; but under pressure of the Civil War, construction problems, and regional jealousies, Columbus was used as the northern terminal. During this time, this twenty mile gap was filled by the running of steamboats between Columbus and Cairo. Then in 1882, the extension was built and put into use.

### **Kentucky and Tennessee Railroad Company**

The company was incorporated in 1870. In 1872 it agreed with the Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company to build this railroad and to lease it to the Mobile and Ohio. The Kentucky Company was to build its section of road from a point opposite Cairo to some point on the Mobile and Ohio. In 1880, it constructed a railroad from South Columbus to East Cairo. The Mobile and Ohio Railroad ferried its cars directly across the river to the incline of the Wabash Railway Company below

the Halliday Hotel. The Illinois Central ferried its cars two or three miles south of this spot before the Illinois Central Railroad bridge was built in 1889.

#### **Cairo and St. Louis Railroad Company**

This railroad was chartered February 16, 1865. Because the company found it difficult to arrange for the construction of its railroad, the actual construction didn't take place until 1871 and was finished in 1875.

The company did not do well, so it leased its property to the Mobile and Ohio. Now the extension from Cairo to St. Louis prospered.

To economize, this company discontinued the expensive practice of transferring cars across the Ohio at Cairo by railroad ferryboats. Instead the Mobile and Ohio arranged to use the Illinois Central Railroad bridge. This method of transfer across the Ohio gave an all rail line from Mobile to St. Louis, with Cairo as a major transfer point.

#### **Cairo and Vincennes Railroad Company**

Cairo legislature incorporated this company on March 6, 1867. Work began in 1868, but was forced to stop because of forfeitures. It was completed in 1873.

For a number of years, the company occupied Commercial Avenue throughout its whole length. This practice was discontinued in 1886 when a change was made by a city ordinance. The railroad followed the same course of action as the Cairo and St. Louis and was leased to the Big Four, the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railway Company. The Big Four operated on the same track as the previous company.

#### **Cairo and Thebes Railroad Company**

This company was organized in 1905. While the Illinois Central had a direct connection with Thebes, general feeling was that a more direct line would be desirable. The depression of 1907 halted the work almost entirely, so the road was not completed before 1910.

The railroad caused controversy because of its location. It extended into the city as far as 15th and Washington Avenue, where the stations were established. John Lansden mirrored public opinion when he stated, "A railroad yard with its smoking engines and its noise close to a public library will certainly not suffer by the presence of the library . . ."

By 1910, Cairo had become quite a railroad center. There were six major lines running to and from Cairo to as far away as Chicago, St. Louis, and Mobile; or as near as Thebes and Vincennes. These roads gave Cairo transportation advantages equaled by very few other places in the country.

Cairo's big railroad era is gone now, but the value and importance of her railroad history can still be seen. If it wasn't for the railroads and their influence, Cairo would not be on the map today.



## **OUR 100 YEARS IN CAIRO**

**By BARBARA JOHNSTON**

When I decided to write an essay on the history of Cairo, I knew right where to look for information—our attic! It's full of the histories of my family and Cairo starting from the first.

To begin with, my great great grandfather, Sanford Bennett, and his wife, Katherine McCallum Bennett (from Inverness, Scotland) came to Cairo in 1866. Two years later my great great grandfather, Alexander Johnston, and his wife, Katherine Stuart Johnston, came from Edinburg, Scotland to settle in Cairo. The original deeds to property here are still in our attic. They state that Alexander bought lots from a John Able in 1872. John Able had first purchased them in May of 1865 from Samuel Staats Taylor and Edwin Parsons, the Trustees of the Cairo City Property. The taxes on these two lots for 1873 were a grand total of \$20.00. The tax statements and the deeds to the other three lots he purchased are still intact after about ninety-five years.

Alexander worked as an engineer for Green and Wood Mill Co., later to become Wood and Bennett. His son, William James Johnston, married Mamie Bennett, whose father was associated with Wood and Bennett. This was a wholesale grocery company in Cairo—one of the pioneer firms. W. J. and Mamie were my great grandfather and great grandmother. He became president of Woodward Hardware in 1902. This was an important and widely known business of Cairo at that time and for many years afterward. He was elected City Park Commissioner under Mayor Parsons and had the beautiful hard maple trees planted all along Washington Avenue. These trees are a famous part of Cairo even today. I don't remember my great grandparents, but I do remember my two great great aunts very well.

Frances Bennett, Sanford and Kate's daughter, was born February 8th, 1872. Aunt Frances (who didn't want us to call her Great Great Aunt) was a member of the First Presbyterian Church for over seventy-five years where she amazed me and many other people by never having to use a hymnal for either the songs or the responsive readings! She graduated from Safford School, my grade school but her high school, as valedictorian of the class of 1890. Her best friend, Effie Lansden, was salutatorian of this same class. This was the 15th high school commencement held in Cairo.

Aunt Frances taught in the Cairo public schools for over fifty years, was a charter member of the Cairo Business and Professional Women's Club, and also was one of their first directors. She passed away in 1963 lacking just four months of being ninety-two. She seemed just as active in her later years as she was when she was younger. She was always a dignified lady and when she died, it seemed as if it was the end of an era.

My other great great aunt, Mary Johnston, was just as amazing. Her parents were Alexander and Kate Johnston. She was born in 1864. When she was four, her family moved to Cairo. When she was fourteen, they moved into the home where she lived for over seventy-five years. She was very active in the First Presbyterian Church and was assistant treasurer to the Woodward Hardware Company. Although she wasn't as lively in later years as Aunt Frances, she lived to be ninety-six lacking only two months of being ninety-seven.

The house my family and I live in was built fifty-three years ago by W. J. Johnston and his son, Hugh R. Johnston Sr., who was also in Woodward Hardware and Cairo Hardware. He was a charter member of the Kiwanis Club and a past president of it. He was also in the Cairo Association of Commerce and other civic bodies.

My grandmother, Betty Johnston, was the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. C. C. Eldred of Joliet, Illinois. She lived in our present home since 1916 after coming here as a bride. She was active in the Red Cross



for twenty-two years, a job she took after her husband, Hugh Sr., died in 1939. When she passed away in 1964, it was a great loss to all of us as well as to the town.

#### Conclusion

I have lived here in this house, in this town all my life and so have most of my ancestors for the last 100 years. I appreciate my heritage and am very proud of it and Cairo.



## THE U. S. S. CAIRO—SYMBOL OF A NATION'S UNITY

By JAN KNIFFEN

A dull thud was the unspectacular herald of the reincarnation of the U. S. S. Cairo, the seventh in a series of city class ironclads designed by James Buchanan Eads for the Union during the Civil War.

The muffled thud was the result of an iron bar about twenty feet long meeting the steel roof of the old warriors pilot house. This iron bar was held by one of three explorers—Edwin C. Bearss, Warren Grabau, or Don Jacks—who were moored near the left bank (facing downstream) of the Yazoo River.

This final discovery in 1956 was to be the beginning of a new life for a ship that had been a hard luck vessel from the day she was built. Her construction had taken place at Mound City, Ill., which is about twelve miles from Cairo, whose name she bears.

The ill-fated ironclad "Cairo" received her commission at Cairo January 15, 1862, and saw her first action at Eastport, Miss., April 1, 1862. She then joined the small fleet flotilla of the Mississippi squadron above Vicksburg, December 8, 1862, and this was the harbinger of the "Cairo's" destruction.

On that fateful day, the 12th, the "Cairo," the "Pittsburgh," and the tinclads "Marmora" and "Signal," and the Ellet ram, "Queen of the West," had been ordered up the Yazoo to research enemy positions and clear the area of torpedos (mines).

By eleven A. M. the "Marmora" had overhauled a skiff containing two men, a white and a negro. The former was Jonathan Williams. Williams reluctantly admitted full knowledge of the torpedoes' locations. After Getty, commander of the "Marmora," had wrung him dry, Williams was cast into irons. So much for the rights of civilians.

The fleet was proceeding onward when musket fire was heard by Selfridge, the "Cairo's" commander. Thinking the "Mormora" was under sniper fire, he hastened to throw the big ironclad into the fray. As the grim fund of firepower drew abreast of the little sternwheeler, Selfridge hailed Getty, demand to know why he had stopped. Getty answered, "Here is where the torpedoes are."

Selfridge ordered the "Marmora" to lower her cutter and investigate the object before her. An ensign aboard the cutter severed a line leading to the bank, and a second object bobbed into view and was destroyed.

Selfridge, annoyed at the delay, now ordered the little "Marmora" forward. The "Marmora" hesitated to do so, and Selfridge became im-



patient. He again ordered Getty ahead, and started his own ship forward. Her wheel had made scarcely six revolutions when the two explosions in quick succession shook the area. One torpedo had exploded off the ironclad's port while the second had been directly beneath the bow.

Within several minutes, the water was cascading over her fore-castle, and her only hope was to beach. The tenacious little river wasn't to be denied, however, the Yazoo's current swung the stern of the vessel downstream and brought the full weight of the ironclad against the hawser. The cable tightened and snapped like a guitar string as the majestic "Cairo" disappeared beneath twelve fathoms of water.

The smokestacks and flagstaffs, the only visible features of the old warrior, were removed and her location forgotten over the years.

She rested peacefully on the floor of the Yazoo for 94 years when that fateful iron rod struck her hull. After this pinpointing in '56, salvage operations were planned, and in 1964 her rebirth was made possible by Bisso and Company, a salvage crew.

During the operations to lift the "Cairo," cables were slipped under it, and once the entire ship broke the surface of the water. But, the Yazoo was destined to hold its prize a while longer; the cables sliced through the hull and severed the ship in three pieces. The three separate pieces were then raised on barges, and the Yazoo lost its entombed protectorate.

The "Cairo" is now at Vicksburg, swiftly becoming a tourist attraction and a unique museum. The "Cairo" shall live on now—a symbol of the power of a nation and the unity of the United States of America.



## RIVERLORE: A CENTURY OF BEAUTY

By ROSE KOE

Riverlore, a stately white mansion, was built at the beginning of an extravagant era. It was 1865; the Civil War was over. Reconstruction was beginning and Cairo was a mushrooming river town. The house was built by river-loving Captain William Parker Halliday to match the coming lavishness, the prosperity that was around the corner and the promise that was Cairo.

Even though Captain Halliday apparently built this beautiful home with the idea of settling down and becoming a substantial business man, at heart he obviously remained a steamboat captain. Winding from the third floor to the roof is a ship's stair. From the roof, Captain Halliday could look out over the city, and before the trees and homes sprang up to interrupt his view, could see his beloved rivers the Ohio and the Mississippi.

In November, 1900, Riverlore became the residence of Dr. John J. Rendleman, a practicing physician and surgeon for 67 years and Mrs. Rendleman, both of whom preserved and improved the house and grounds throughout the years. Their youngest daughter and her hus-

band, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick J. Grieve, are the present owners and residents of Riverlore.

High above the river, in the finest residential part of Cairo, stands Riverlore, a 3-story, 11-room residence of solid brick, with stone foundation and full basement. Although there are but 11 rooms, each of them, from the first floor to the third, is high-ceilinged and spacious.

Riverlore's garden setting of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre is landscaped with magnolias, flowering shrubs. Red brick walks of herringbone pattern surround the house. Charming accessories to this beautiful house are a fountain, a sundial, and a handsome weathervane atop the grape-arbor. This white painted Victorian has a slate mansard roof capped by ornamental iron railing. The roof is covered with slate set in geometric patterns.

Entrance into the house is through double doors elaborately carved. An old English hall clock in the entrance hall, which was bought in 1903, tells the phases of the moon. It has 2 sets of chimes, Westminster and Whittington.

Rooms of graceful design offer a charming environment and a good French type architectural plan. Characteristic of "the golden era" the luxury features of the house include ornate plaster moldings and ceiling medallions (cartouches), floor length windows, dormer windows, carved woodwork and tall doors of yellow poplar, stained glass and large elaborate mirrors, period chandeliers, and fireplaces decorated with ornamental ceramic tiles. A modern kitchen has a scenic mural of the Mississippi River.

The solid brick walls on the outside of the house are about 20" thick; brick partitions in the house are 12" thick. The hardwood floors are laid over fire-resistant concrete.

Lying on the parlor floor is a beautiful rug that has the American motives, such as the Statue of Liberty, Wright airplane, Liberty Bell, Mayflower, Panama Canal, and the covered wagon. The parlor also has a fireplace, a large mirror on the mantle, ornamental plaster cornice, lovely stained glass, and a brass period chandelier. On the walls are the exquisite hand wrought lace fans which Mrs. Grieve brought back from Belgium and France.

The library is equipped with a built-in leaded glass door bookcase, and a large picture window with art glass fanlights. The door which leads to conservatory is a prize winning beveled leaded glass panel that was exhibited at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904.

The fireplace in the dining room has tiles depicting the 3 graces (mythological people). In this room is also a very handsome mirror which was the mate to the mirror in the lobby of the historic Halliday Hotel.

A wide oval cantilever stairway with a carved mahogany balustrade and 5 wall niches winds from the first floor hall to the "pilot house" on the roof some 40 feet above. An ornamental iron railing crowns the flat mansard roof. The third contains a small and complete theatre with a jewel of a stage, backdrops, curtains and footlights, a proscenium arch, and an auditorium to seat 50 people. The walls of the auditorium are decorated with the original French wallpaper with stylized figures to depict the four seasons.

This proud 100 year old manor house retains the dignified charm which is enhanced by painstaking care and skillful modernization. And though the house which was once gay with receptions and parties is rather quiet now, in it are kept the gracious ways of living which stamp the flavor of southern hospitality.

# HALLIDAY HOTEL—A MEMORY OF THE PAST

By ROSE KOE

Had almost everything else in the city been made to correspond with the Halliday Hotel, Cairo would have been a fine city of fifty to one hundred thousand people. If Cairo could "grow twenty feet high and swell out in proportion," in the language of Dickens, so as to correspond with the hotel, the Illinois Central Railroad bridge would be at the center of the city instead of being on its north boundary.

The Halliday Hotel, second and Ohio Streets, was a five-story L-shaped structure with stone quoins, an ornate cupola, and a mansard-like roof from which project dormer windows. Excepting the south half on Ohio Street, construction of this building began in the summer of 1857. Thirty tons of slate for its roof were lost on February 4, 1858, when the Colonel Crosman burst a boiler near New Madrid, Mo., and sank with twelve passengers aboard. A second set-back came in June, 1858, when a flood undermined the nearly completed building and caused parts of the walls to collapse.

Despite these reverses the structure was completed in 1859 and opened in January of that year as the St. Charles Hotel. It was conducted by different persons from time to time, under leases from its owners; and like almost everything else in Cairo, had a somewhat varied experience especially after "the war" closed. During "the war" its business was up to its full capacity all the time. Its name was changed to "The Halliday" and opened under the new management July 1, 1881. Of the hostelry the *Guide Americana* published in Paris, France, 1859, said that it was one "which would honor the finest cities of the world."

The Halliday was on a par with the best hotels in cities like St. Louis and Chicago, and under the management of Mr. L. P. Parker had done perhaps more than any single establishment or agency to sustain the claim of Cairo to Metropolitan proportions and importance.

Admirably situated, apart from other buildings, it could afford at one glance a view of three states and of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers at their point of meeting to form the mightiest waterway of the continent. Looking north the Ohio presents a great semicircle visible for seven miles, spanned at northern limits of the city by the Illinois Central railway bridge, one of the beautiful and perfect examples of civil engineering in the United States. Southernly the sweep of waters of the two great rivers is visible for ten miles, presenting a view that has no parallel on this continent.

In front was a beautiful little park affording a promenade, beneath the shade of whose trees, among birds and flowers, guests may sit at will in the spring, summer and fall months fanned by a cooling breeze, and watch the tide of commerce as it ebbs and flows on the bosom of "La Belle Ohio."

The hotel had commodious and handsomely equipped offices, large well lighted and perfectly furnished dining room and elegant and luxurious parlors. These were supplemented in every detail by modern appointments, first-class accommodations, agreeable surroundings, exceptional table service and perfect cuisine. So true was this that the Halliday was as well and favorably known to the public as any on the line of travel between Chicago and New Orleans.

Clean, elegantly furnished and perfectly lighted guest rooms, commodious writing and reading rooms, prompt service and that courteous treatment in the absence of which guests were never satisfied, were a few of the things which have won fame for the Halliday and a reputation as a hotel man for Mr. Parker.

An artesian well, 824 feet in depth, on the premises, supplied the hotel with an abundance of perfectly pure table water, as well as for other uses, such as laundry, kitchen and the bath. It was very palatable, of exceptional purity, as shown by chemical analysis, and highly recommended by capable physicians as a remedial agent in kidney and bladder troubles, many permanent cures having been effected from its use. The hotel was equipped with its own refrigerating and ice plant.

When Cairo became an army depot in 1861, a war correspondent for Harper's weekly reported that "the officers . . . occupy the hotel from cellar to garret." Most important of its notable wartime guests was General Ulysses Simpson Grant who occupied Room 215. From the window at the south of this chamber the General could look on to Fort Defiance and the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi. This view had been obstructed by an addition made to the hotel in 1902. The furnishings of Room 215 remained as they were when Grant lodged there.

On the walls of the hotel lobby were pictures of Fort Defiance, Civil War, Cairo, gunboats of the Western Flotilla, and a photograph of General Grant and McClernand posed with fellow officers before the old post office at Sixth and Commercial Avenue. The taproom of the hotel contained a bar manufactured in 1859, known as "Grant's bar."

In the cellar of the hotel, under the east sidewalk, were 8 dungeon-like chambers which, according to a tradition sustained by hotel employees, were used to conceal fugitive slaves and later to quarter captured confederate troops. Research fails to substantiate either of these claims.

When the Halliday Hotel burned, it was a tremendous loss to the city of Cairo. Since it was one of the most historic sites, it has often been referred to as "the last great hotel of the period on the Mississippi River."

Today, only the most recently built part, "the annex" remains standing, its windows boarded up, looking sightlessly over the levee walls.



## GREEK REVIVAL COURTHOUSE

By JIM MORELAND

The old county courthouse at Thebes has acted as the county seat of Alexander county, a meeting hall for clubs, a library, and a polling place. At the present, it is being used as a tourist attraction in the form of a museum. Before I tell you about the museum, I shall give you a brief account of the history.

The county record books show that on February 26, 1845, George



Sparhawk deeded sufficient land for a courthouse and buildings with consideration of locating the county set in Thebes, Illinois.

In September 1845, L. L. Lightner was appointed to draw plans and ascertain probable cost of a courthouse at Thebes. In December he was appointed agent for the erection of the building.

The first term of court was held in 1845 under a big elm tree with the courthouse being built the following year. In January, 1846, Lightner entered into a contract with Arnst Barkhausen for the erection of the building.

Frank Planert of Council, Idaho, was a great-grandson of the builder of the courthouse at Unity, Illinois, in 1842.

From Frank Planert came the following:

"The old courthouse at Thebes was built about 1844-1845. The architect was John Christian Henry Barkhausen, who planned and supervised the building. The outside plaster, after approximately one hundred years, shows little deterioration.

The price, as I was informed, by the son of the architect and builder, was \$4,400.00."

From March 1848 to September 1854, the records show only payments of indebtedness on building and for various repairs. In September 1854, Lightner was ordered to secure plans for putting up Judges seats, bar, jury boxes, and a flight of steps from the road to the west door.

In March of 1860, the city council of Cairo offered the use of its city jail to be used as the county jail, and recorded fifteen chosen lots in block 48 for a proposed courthouse.

One prisoner of the Thebes courthouse was Dred Scott, a negro who made his flight to freedom in 1856. He escaped from the jail, traveled cross land to Jonesboro, and boarded an Illinois Central Railroad train.

In June 1860, the commissioners ordered William Yost to call on S. Staats Taylor for the lots chosen. He also accepted the offer of the city courtrooms to be used as a temporary courtroom.

This brought an end to a colorful period of history in the justice of Alexander county. It had all started in America, Ill., where the first county seat had been set up in the home of William Alexander in 1818. In 1831, the America courthouse was finally finished. Then in 1833, the county seat was moved to Unity, due to its more central location in the county. The Unity courthouse was finished in 1837. On March 2, 1843, the separation of Pulaski and Alexander counties was achieved. The county seat at Unity remained in Alexander county. Due to a fire that destroyed nearly all of the courthouse and its records in 1842, the county seat was moved to Thebes in March of 1845.

At present Alexander county courthouse is at Cairo. Since Cairo sent most of the prisoners to be tried at Thebes, the courthouse was moved to Cairo in 1860.

With the backing of the Thebes Woman's Club, Men's Club, and Town Board, the people of Thebes set out to make a museum out of the old county seat in 1966. Mrs. Leland Shafer, leader of Thebes Woman's Club, and Raymond Baugher, leader of the Men's Club, were the two main leaders in starting the project of making the courthouse a museum. Mrs. Shafer gathered as much information for historical purposes as she could. Documents and relics were hard to come by, for mostly only legends and family stories remained.



Due to the aid of the Green Finger project in the state of Illinois, under the Nelson Amendment, the task of restoration of the museum has been lightened somewhat. The main problem that holds back this project is finances. So far, with the help of the Youth Corp, the museum has been opened in the summer months. Through the youth and help of Green Finger, the area has been cleared of brush and trees, making it possible to set up a 7-acre park there. They have also repaired windows, restored original fire-places, and repaired a walk that leads from the top of the hill to the base.

Tom Booker, Associate Farm Advisor, said that the reason so much was being put into making the courthouse a museum was, "... the people of Thebes want the job and are willing to work for it, which is an important step in getting the job done."

The courthouse is open each afternoon and all day Saturday and Sunday. Mrs. Shafer reports that about 1,200 persons toured the building this summer, with no road sign. A sign has been designed and will soon be set in place on highway 3 at the Thebes Spur.



## UNITED STATES MARINE HOSPITAL

By **DEBORAH MORGAN**

Captain John R. Thomas, our congressman in 1882, enacted a law appropriating sixty thousand dollars for the purchase of grounds and the erection of buildings for the United States Marine Hospital. In September of that year, Surgeon General Hamilton came to Cairo and he, together with Mr. George Fisher, the surveyor of the port, and General C. W. Pavey, the collector of internal revenue, looked over the city to choose a site for the hospital. The site was not definitely decided on until some time in 1883, when the present grounds between Tenth and Twelfth Streets and Cedar Street and Jefferson Avenue were chosen and purchased from the Trustees of the Cairo Trust Property for the sum of fourteen thousand dollars. The grounds included seventy-two lots. The buildings are now practically the same as they were when they were erected. Although it was finished in 1885, it was not formally opened until some time in February of 1886 at its dedication.

The United States Government built the United States Marine Hospital, as its name implies, for caring and nursing of sick and invalid sailors of our navy, all river men, and those in government service on the inland waters of the country. Up to this time, these patients were taken care of by the Sisters of the Holy Cross at St. Mary's Hospital and for a time the Sisters conducted the new hospital under the supervision of Doctor Duncan A. Carmichael.

In March of 1915, the Hospital, under the supervision of Dr. James M. Cassaway, surgeon in charge, began the care of morphine users, which totaled two hundred. The users had been unable to obtain the drug since March 1 of that year.

The hospital was closed in the latter part of 1915 and was moved to Kirkwood, Mo. The patients at that time were transferred to St. Mary's Hospital.

Today the buildings and grounds are being used as the Alexander County Tuberculosis Hospital and the Tri-County Health Department.

From Lansden's History of Cairo is taken the following list of surgeons and past assistant surgeons in charge:

Duncan A. Carmichael 1885; James M. Gassaway, 1888-1890; Rell M. Woodward, 1890-1894; Ezra K. Sprague, March-Nov. 1894; Gassaway, 1894-1897; Parker C. Kallock, 1897-1899; W. A. Sheeler, Jan.-May 1899; H. C. Russell, May-Dec. 1899.

John M. Holt, 1899-1901; James H. Oakley, 1901-1903; Gregario M Guiteras, 1903-1907; Julius O. Cobb, 1907-1908; Robert L. Wilson, 1908-1910. Dr. James N. Gassaway, 1915, when Marine Hospital was closed.



## THE BELLE OF CAIRO, ILLINOIS

By DEBORAH MORGAN

She was five foot two, brown-eyed, pug-nosed and the belle of Cairo, Illinois, when that town numbered nine thousand inhabitants and fifty saloons. Her name—Isabella Maud Rittenhouse.

Maud, as she was commonly called, lived in Cairo, a thriving steam-boat town on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, in the 1830's. At the age of twelve, Maud started a journal which she kept conscientiously until she was thirty. Later in her life she burned the first volume but kept the six others that followed. The six journals were all of the same size and were bound in red leather. Each volume contained at least 100,000 words; they covered the years from 1881 to 1895. In her very legible hand she told everything to her silent confidante. One amazing thing about her journals was that she wrote them all in purple ink!

This series of six journals was edited and published in 1939 by her son-in-law, Richard Lee Strout, in the book "Maud", which became a best seller. The book is an interesting and accurate account of the life of a well-to-do and well-bred young woman in a small mid-western town during the 1880's.

In her journals Maud told about her many love affairs. The young gentlemen of Cairo seemed always to be falling in love with her, although she led them all a merry chase.

Maud was a constant theater-goer. She was probably the most excited person in Cairo when the doors to the Opera House were first opened. She attended the opening night performance on December 15, 1881. Her love of footlights was too strong to let her remain just a spectator, and she soon became Cairo's favorite amateur actress.

In 1884 Maud was accepted at the School of Fine Arts in St. Louis. While in St. Louis she became a very good artist, but she was very homesick for "dear ugly Cairo."

Upon returning to Cairo she set up her own art studio in the attic of the family's fifteen-room brick home on Seventh and Walnut Streets. Besides painting in the studio, she did all her writing there. Not only did she write her journal, but she also wrote for "Godey's Ladies' Book." She won a literary prize for a novel (about a place in North Carolina which she had never seen) called "A Candid Critic."

The hectic and happy days in which Maud wrote her journal ended when she wrote the last entry in her fourteen-year journal on June 6, 1895. At that time Maud was preparing to marry an engineer-turned-physician—Dr. Earl Hugh Mayne. Dr. Mayne had helped with the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad bridge, which was an international wonder and the longest bridge in the world when it was built.

After their marriage Dr. and Mrs. Mayne moved to Brooklyn, New York. They became the parents of three daughters. Maud lived in Brooklyn until her death on March 8, 1946.

Editor's Note: House purchased by the Cairo Historical Society in 1968 and is currently in the process of restoration.



## DARIUS BLAKE HOLBROOK—SECURING A FOUNDATION

By JOYCE MURRY

### Introduction

Darius Blake Holbrook was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts. He had been a prominent man in the city of New York for many years, and had great ability and large personal influence with all with whom he was associated.

Besides his work in establishing the city of Cairo, Illinois, and in securing the great land grant for the Illinois Central Railroad, he was associated with Cyrus W. Field in laying the first Atlantic cable.

He died in New York City, January 22, 1858. His wife was Elizabeth Thurston Ingraham; and their only child, now Baroness Caroline Holbrook Von Roques, married William Chandler, of the banking house of St. Johns, Powers & Company, of Mobile, Alabama.

### Character

The second attempt to establish the city of Cairo seems to have been begun by Darius Holbrook. He was not an adventurer, a dreamer, or a man of merely schemes. Force of character, strong will, ceaseless activity and enterprise, initiative, ability to bring others to see things as he saw them, were only some of his remarkable endowments.

These characteristics were noticeable at all times. Nothing within the bounds of reason seemed too hard for him. Where others drew back he pushed forward. He had no patience with men who floated with the current. He would take advantage of it if it carried him toward the goal of his plans but if in the other direction, he turned against it and buffeted its waves with a faith and belief that seemed unconquerable.

### Project — Cairo

Darius must have known all about this place or geographical point before he came here. He knew of the attempt and failure of 1818. He knew or soon ascertained who were the owners of the lands between

the rivers; for nothing could be safely done without first acquiring good titles to the lands.

He knew the low site, the river floods, the abrasians and inroads upon the shores, the need of strong levees and of the clearing off of the dense woods. He knew that while the geographical point was all that could be desired, the proposed city must have a secure foundation, a safe and enduring site.

It was more than starting and building a city. A site had to be first provided. But he seems to have firmly believed that he and those associated with him could bring moneyed men to such a belief in the feasibility of the enterprise as would lead them to make all necessary advances of means.

It was then as it was in 1818 and is now, a question of money. As the first promoters in 1818 left everything to the control and management of Comegys, so in 1836 to 1846, Holbrook seems to have been invested with unlimited authority. He was said to be not merely the chief representative of the companies, but the companies themselves.

If such was the case, it must have been due to the very general belief that what he wanted was needed and what he did not want was to be laid aside. He made two or three trips to London, and the great banking house of John Wright & Company became his company's financial representative in that city.

These bankers were at the same time the agents of our state for the sale of its canal bonds. Besides Holbrook, there were in London Richard M. Young, then one of our United States senators, and Ex-Governor John Reynolds, agents for the state and arranging with Wright & Company to take charge of the state's bond sales.

Daniel Webster was also there, and while there gave his written opinion to Holbrook regarding his company's title to the lands it had mortgaged to the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company to secure the payment of its Cairo bonds.

Holbrook did everything, was everywhere, saw everybody, legislators and capitalists and other men of prominence and influence whom he supposed might aid him. He secured in London large sums of money and must have used, here in Cairo, more than a million dollars. He and his company had great faith in their enterprise, and they determined to obtain titles to the land almost regardless of the price demanded.

Holbrook worked on faithfully even after the failure of Wright & Company. He must have known, however, long before the end came that his attempt must meet a fate not wholly unlike that which came to the Kaskaskia people in 1818.

The great London bankers had turned against Wright & Company and brought them to bankruptcy, and he knew that if he could not raise money on his Cairo bonds at the outset in this country, he certainly could not do it now that the whole financial world was in a state of suspense as to what would be the outcome of the monetary depression almost the world over.

Holbrook, seeing that he could go no further, set about finding what entirely new arrangements might be made by which he and those associated with him might save something out of the failed enterprise.

#### **Obstacles to Overcome**

A number of writers about Cairo have criticized him and some of them very severely. Not enough of the facts and circumstances, run-



ning through a number of years, enable people to express a very satisfactory opinion as to those matters about which he was criticized.

The work which he had undertaken was difficult in the extreme; he seemed to have firmly believed that he could accomplish it. After the first two or three years he must have seen more clearly the difficulty of the situation. These called forth only greater efforts on his part; but when it became more and more evident that the situation was growing more and more doubtful, he may have resorted to measures which seemed more or less inconsistent with that straightforward kind of conduct about which all men speak well but which many of them find it exceedingly difficult to follow when overtaken by unexpected embarrassments.

Observation shows that most men in times of severe financial trial and when failure seems impending, will turn aside here and there and do this or that and the other thing which they would have before severely criticized. Holbrook was determined that his enterprise should not fail, and it was a long time before he could see anything but success ahead of him. What he did at Washington and Springfield and New York, even as late as 1849, shows that his hope was not entirely gone, although his Cairo City and Canal Company had already sold out to the Cairo City Property Trust.

It may not have been strictly accurate to speak of Holbrook as having begun the second attempt to start a city here. Breese, Gilbert and Swanwick seem to have first moved in the matter and to have sold to Holbrook, late in 1835 or early in 1836, an interest in their land entries here of August and September, 1835, and this seems to have been the first introduction of Holbrook to the proposed scheme. From that time forward, he became the leading spirit of the enterprise, long drawn out and beset with many difficulties.

### Conclusion

From January 16, 1836, to February 10, 1851, there is the period of something over fifteen years, during all of which Holbrook never swerved an inch in his devotion to the city of Cairo. The very best years of his life he had put into his attempt to establish it; therefore, one must readily agree that the Cairo of today owes its existence more to Darius Blake Holbrook than to any other man.



## HISTORIC COURTHOUSE AT THEBES— MONUMENT OF DAYS GONE BY

By JANA OGG

Henry Barkhausen, an architect who once served the king of his native Germany in that capacity, was one of the early settlers of Alexander County. After losing his job in Germany, he moved here in 1838, settling on a section of land at the foot of a series of bluffs, which is now the village of Thebes.

After Alexander County was organized separately from Pulaski County in 1843, and the courthouse at Unity burned, the county seat was moved to Thebes.



In January of 1846, L. L. Lightner, who had been appointed to draw plans for the building, drew up a contract, and Henry Barkhausen, by virtue of his education and experience, was given the contract to build a courthouse. This courthouse, still standing today as a monument to the ability of its builder, was completed in 1848.

The walls are of unhewn sandstone, laid in mortar. The timbers are of local lumber, hand-hewn to size, the boards for the floor and the roof were hand sawed, and the hand shaven shingles were split from native timber.

The walls were plastered inside and out with plaster made of local material. Lime from near-by deposits of limestone was burned and mixed with sand and hair.

After being burned, the lime was stored in a pit and allowed to ripen for an entire winter. After more than one hundred years this outside plaster has shown almost no deterioration.

The building has a front porch in southern colonial style, and the contract price was \$4,400.

The building was built on the brow of a bluff overlooking the Mississippi, and at once became a landmark to help rivermen guide their boats in the treacherous channel through the "chain of Rocks." the break of the Mississippi River through the Ozark range of hills. Although it has suffered from lack of care, it is still well known to rivermen, and it still helps them guide their boats.

After being finished, the Thebes courthouse played an important part in history. According to legend, it is the site of Abraham Lincoln's first speech, while he was still an unknown lawyer, and it holds the echoes of the voices of such men as the "Little Giant", Stephen A. Douglas; the Union General and United States Senator from Illinois, John A. Logan; and others of more than local fame.

Recorded history says Dred Scott was imprisoned there, escaped, and made his way over the "Devil's Backbone" road to freedom and safety at Anna, where he caught a train to the north.

Later his name was written permanently in history by the Dred Scott trial decision.

To reach the courthouse, prisoners, lawyers, judges and witnesses had to go by steamboat around the point, and thirty miles up the Mississippi to Thebes.

There everyone unloaded and made the steep climb up to hill to the courthouse, beautiful in its simplicity.

As evening drew near, the crowd came back down the long hill, minus the prisoner, who was locked safely in the dungeon with two foot thick walls of earth and rock dividing the cells.

If the river was low; gorged with ice, as it often was; or if a sudden storm whipped up—well, justice had to wait another day.

The delays of this system became intolerable and so in 1860 the county seat was moved to Cairo.

Since then the old courthouse has gone through various stages of use and disuse. It has been used as a Methodist Church, a library, a town hall, and a residence.

In recent years it has stood empty and ghostlike—its windows broken—its stone steps askew—its paint peeled—a monument to a day that has all but been forgotten.

Editor's Note: The Thebes Woman's Club chose the Court House as a crub project and, with the help of civic organizations and citizens of Thebes, it has undertaken restoration of the building. A museum is housed there, also.

# GOOSE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD— HORSESHOE LAKE

By JEFF PATTON

## Foreword

Man is a creative being, always trying to improve on and build things. Often in his strife for progress he destroys many of nature's beauties and creatures, and, when the project he desired is completed, it is not always equal in majesty to that which he destroyed.

But this is not always the case. In some instances man actually helps nature and her off-spring. By his ingenuity and skill he can succeed where nature has failed and bring from the biblical rock of neglect a torrent of beauty and usefulness. Such is the saga of Horse-shot Lake.

The story of Horseshoe Lake begins many years ago with the mighty Mississippi River. As it threads its way southward to the Gulf of Mexico, the river twists, called an ox-bow, was cut off from the main channel. This ox-bow was like the ancient Roman god Janus, for it had two faces. It contained water only during the rainy season and almost completely dried up during draught periods.

In 1927 the Illinois Department of Conservation decided to make Horseshoe into a game refuge for Canadian geese. For this purpose the department purchased 3,500 acres, which included all of the island and most of the lake. Much of the land on the island was then put into a grain crop to provide food for the expected birds. A dam was constructed across the south end, and in this way the lake was enabled to hold water all year long.

The lake was thus made into a veritable paradise for the birds and they soon began to converge on it from their natural wintering grounds on sand bars and islands of the Mississippi.

As the number of geese increased so did the number of hunting clubs in the area. When the annual harvest of geese became excessive, the Conservation Department became alarmed, and, in 1939, it began a long term management program. In 1945 the season closed after only five days with a harvest of 5,000 geese. In 1964 the entire Mississippi Flyway was closed to goose hunting, but in 1947 only the 18,000 acres adjoining Horseshoe was closed to the taking of this magnificent bird.

The Department sensed the need for expansion and in due course bought land in nearby areas. This increased the size of the refuge at Horseshoe to approximately 7,000 acres.

With these measures being enforced the goose population increased steadily until by 1954 it had swelled to 170,000. The special protective zone was therefore abolished, and in its place there were now special hunting regulations. The population continued to increase and presently during the season it will vary from 150,000 to perhaps 200,000.

Beginning in 1961 Illinois and Wisconsin established "kill quotas" which prohibit an excessive kill of geese.

The economic importance of the hunting season in this area cannot be overstated. The net income of the more than thirty private hunting clubs in the area totals many thousands of dollars and forms

a large portion of the residents' incomes. Restaurants, hotels, motels, and filling stations in the area also do a tremendous volume of business during the season which begins in middle November and ends about the first of January or as soon as the quota is reached.

Preparation for the season begins many months before it actually starts when the hunter phones in for reservations at the clubs. As the first geese begin to arrive, the farmers rush to harvest their crops, dig their pits, and set up their blinds.

Opening day nears and the hunters begin to flood in. The club owners pray for rain and moonless nights, for it is under these conditions that the honkers fly best.

The long awaited day finally arrives and long before dawn the roads are crowded with the cars of hunters on their way to the clubs. Shooting begins with the rising of the sun and most club operators insist that the hunters be present at least 45 minutes early. The operator briefs the hunters. "Don't shoot until sunup. No high shooting. Be careful and everyone will get two geese." They then receive their pit numbers, pile into the jeeps or trucks, and are carried swiftly into the fields. As the sun rises the men open fire. One pit gets two, another three! Many club operators now use two-way radios and in this way keep in touch with observers who watch the different fields. As the hunters get their geese they stand up, and the observer picks them up in a jeep. They are returned to the club house. Hopefully this will be a good day and everyone will "shoot out" by 3 o'clock closing time.

This is repeated over and over again throughout the season.

Horseshoe appeals not only to the goose hunter but to the angler as well. The lake is amply stocked with crappie, bluegill, and large mouth bass. Anglers flock to the lake in the summer, and in the winter a disappointed goose hunter often finds consolation in the fine fishing.

In recent years there have been numerous improvements around the lake. All of the lakeside roads have been either blacktopped or improved. New campsites have been installed. Also a large pavilion, equipped with twilight lights to permit nighttime parties, has been erected on the lakefront.

All in all it is not hard to see why Horseshoe is as famous as it is in the sports world. And it is easy to understand why thousands of sportsmen every year converge on Horseshoe Lake, Illinois—Goose Capital of the World.



## FORT DEFIANCE STATE PARK

By **LESLIE PIERCEALL**

Little do people know of our unique and interesting state park or the reason for its existence. Most people refer to it as "The Point." From its beginning as a Union stronghold until the end of the Civil War, Fort Defiance played a very important part in the success of the Union Army.

The first man to conceive and build a fort at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi was Sieur Juchereau de St. Denis in 1702. It was over a century later that Fort Defiance was established to aid the Union Army in the War.

The movement toward Cairo in April, 1861, was part of a major operation to the South and West. Eleven days after firing on Fort Sumter, April 12, troops were garrisoned at Cairo in an old distillery building and ordered to block Confederate River traffic and guard the stronghold from seizure by the enemy.

On May 10, 1861, Cairo, Ill., was one great military camp known as Fort Prentiss. Col. B. M. Prentiss, who had been elected Brig. Gen., was in command of the camp. By June 1 the camp was almost in finished condition and was well on its way to being a fortress. Surrounding the camp were smaller armed camps commanding the levee approaches from all directions.

Camp Macalister, on the Ohio bend of the levee, guarded the Ford from surprise attacks upstream while Camp Smith on the Mississippi bend of the levee and Camp Haughtling three miles above guarded the fort from attacks by way of the Mississippi River.

By the last of June, a proud Stars and Stripes flew from the flag-staff of Camp Defiance. Black muzzles of cannon protected the harbor from any attack throughout the war.

In September, 1861, General Prentiss was succeeded by Ulysses S. Grant, who brought with him several regiments to man the fort. In November the name was officially changed to Fort Oefiance.

Other important things took place in November. By then Grant, who was entrusted with the task of holding the area around South-eastern Missouri, had collected more than twenty thousand partially trained men.

During Grant's stay in Cairo (from September 1861 to February 1862) the Union Armies staged an attempt to dislodge the Confederates from Southeastern Missouri. The battle of Belmont—Columbus, Ky., saw the Union soldiers stand up to the Confederate forces with great success.

Navel Headquarters of the Western Flotilla maintained at Cairo's Fort Defiance during the four year struggle. Along with the Naval base an important telegraph station was located at the fort. Training grounds for countless regiments of the Army were in use daily. Many thousands of men passed from Cairo on their way to their respective missions in the War.

Throughout the War Between the States, Fort Defiance was a blessing to the Union forces but a "thorn in the paw" to the Confederates.

When hundreds of soldiers at Fort Defiance became ill with malaria, dysentery, typhoid, and smallpox, Mary B. Safford made a name for herself as the "Cairo Angel" by volunteering her services to help establish camp hospitals in order to care for the sick and wounded. "The Cairo Angel" helped to transfer soldiers from the battlefield to hospitals at the fort. She was the first woman to establish fort hospitals and then transferred the men to them.

After the War, guns stayed at Fort Defiance for some time, but being unused, the fort soon fell into decay.

Now there is left to Cairo no vestage of the original fort, but the name is proudly borne by the state park at the same confluence of the two great rivers, the Ohio and the Mississippi. The cooling shade trees,



the ever present breeze, the changing moods of the mighty Mississippi, and the Ohio provide a pattern of day or night beauty. People are refreshed by the setting of the rivers, unending fleets of river commerce great argosies of the air, and a large city of three States with sights of the two bridges.

Fort Defiance was dedicated by the Governor of Illinois, William Stratton, on Sunday, July 3, 1960. In his dedication speech, he praised the beauty of the new state park that has captured men's minds since the beginning of time, and he said that it was but fitting that such grandeur be shared by the people.

Today the "Old Fort"—or as it is known to us now "The Point," serves as a place to picnic or just relax in an atmosphere of cool, quiet peace with the two great rivers continually moving on their way to the Gulf.



## 1858—CAIRO INUNDATED

By DONNA PROFILET

"The levee is broken—flee for your lives!" was the cry of the Cairo people on Saturday, June 13, 1858, when the levee on the Mississippi side of the town gave way.

For several days previous to this widespread disaster, it had been predicted by many who were familiar with the character of the levees, that the town was in constant danger. The people paid little attention to these warnings because they had been lulled into a feeling of security by the fact that during the past 15 years they had escaped submersion. As a consequence, the flood came upon many of the people unexpectedly, leaving them only time to escape with their lives.

A force of 500 men were as soon as possible, placed upon what was known as the "Old Cross Levee", an embankment running from the Ohio to the Mississippi in the upper portion of the city, with the hope that they would be able to fill up the openings which had been cut on the lines of the streets and stop the flood of this embankment. But the waters poured in so rapidly and came with such a strong current that this attempt was reluctantly but necessarily abandoned.

The poor women and children were seen wringing their hands and crying in utter helplessness. One woman was seen running with a piece of stove-pipe under one arm and a cheap looking-glass under the other, on her way to the Ohio levee, weeping in the greatest distress. Confusion was turned loose, and the people living in the one-story buildings saw death staring them in the face.

Soon through the streets in great force came the muddy waters, carrying logs, fences, trees and lumber; and night settled upon the sad scene. In the darkness and soon in the waters itself, were families making their way to the Ohio Levee. By daylight Sunday morning, there was no dry land to be seen inside the levees, and by noon the waters inside were of the height of the rivers.

Some of the one-story buildings in the low grounds of the town presented only their roofs above the water.



In every quarter of the city, skiffs, canoes and floats of every kind plied industriously from house to house, removing women and children furniture, goods, etc. to the Ohio Levee. The plank walls were sawed into convenient sections and used as floats, and every imaginable species of craft were improvised for the occasion.

Altogether about 500 persons were driven from their homes, and the little strip of the Ohio Levee, the only dry spot for miles around, was crowded with men, women and children, dogs, cattle, plunder, wagons, carts, etc. from one end to the other. Many people made their way in rafts and skiffs and also left on steamboats for the highlands making their absence from Cairo permanent.

Some families were made destitute by the flood, but these were so promptly provided for by the more fortunate citizens that no real cases of suffering ensued. Charity was offered the people from other cities, but the plucky Cairoites said, "No, we can and are providing for our own people".

There was no perceptible rise in the rivers after the breaking of the levee, and the waters began rapidly to recede. In less than two weeks the city was dry again, and every day the citizens were returning to their homes. Logs and rubbish were cleared from the streets, houses were repaired and re-painted, and fences re-built. After a few months the prominent marks of the flood had been cleared away—wiped out forever.

The two years following the submersion of Cairo formed probably the most trying period in her history. Real estate dropped from its former high figure. The shock public confidence had received prevented investments, and business being in a measure deadened. Rival interests eagerly proclaimed the downfall of the city, and confidently predicted it would never rise again, and there were many in Cairo and out of it who were ready to believe the blow had proved effectually crushing. But the repairing, widening and strengthening of the levees and expending vast sums in this work soon created a better feeling and helped to inspire confidence. By the end of the second year of the overflow, property had about regained its former value and the business of the city its accustomed tone. As time wore past, the heights and proportions of the levees increased, confidence in the habitableness of the locality gained its original status.

This tragic flood occurred 108 years ago. Cairo has never been flooded since, although many cities along the Ohio and Mississippi have been inundated. Cairo is now protected by the strongest levee system in the world, under the supervision of the United States Corps of Engineers.



## THE MAGNOLIAS

By PEGGY ROBERTS

The house which stands at 604 Twenty-eighth Street in Cairo, once sheltered a President of the United States and from the numerous magnolia trees which surround it, takes its name—the Magnolias.

Built in 1858 by Colonel Samuel Staats Taylor who was the first Mayor of Cairo, the house was constructed with a wood frame over

brick and followed the general lines of southern architecture of that day in its wide, sweeping veranda which runs three-fourths of the way around the house.

The President who held a press conference in the parlor at the Magnolias was Theodore Roosevelt and the year was 1907. On October 3, the President, who was making a tour from Washington to Memphis in the interest of a deep waterway from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, stopped at Cairo overnight on his way to St. Louis from Memphis.

There could be no doubt that Roosevelt was made comfortable at the Magnolias. The ten room house, which was built before the Civil War swept over the land, was meant for gracious and leisurely living. Every room in the house, with the exception of two kitchens, has its own fireplace. In the guest room which was President Roosevelt's, the fireplace is a soft yellow glazed tile. Fireplaces in the first floor rooms are black marble with black walnut mantelpieces.

The Magnolias was built around immense halls and both the first and second floors are prepared in two shades of red. The proportions of the rooms are gracious; the drawing room has double entrances flanked by white colonnade, and the reception hall is large and stately.

The Magnolias was meant for entertaining guests, for banquets, for parties. Its facilities were not overtaxed when it came to entertaining a president.

Colonel Taylor lived in the house until his death in 1896. George Parsons who was Mayor of Cairo (first elected in April of 1905, then in April 1907, and then re-elected in April, 1909) when President Roosevelt visited, bought the house from the Taylor estate and the house and grounds were again gay with guests and entertainments.

In every community the moral and the material must go along side by side. In every city there should be good schools, and other institutions of learning, good churches, good societies and other means and sources of culture, plenty of good water, good lighting, and good streets. Mayor Parsons was interested and very active in securing many of these.

In Cairo, one of its greatest needs was good streets. There were many high board sidewalks built on stilts above the seepwater. Some of these streets were greatly improved by means of permanent and substantial pavement. These were: Ohio, Twenty-eighth, Sycamore, Poplar, Elm, Second, Walnut, Twenty-first, and Thirty-fourth Streets. Washington Avenue was developed into a beautiful spot.

Many beautiful trees were planted along the Avenue by Mayor Parsons. He also did much to beautify St. Mary's Park, directly across the street from his Magnolias. Then too, there was the building of a large sewer on Commercial Ave. from Second to Thirty-eighth Street and the other outlet sewer on Tenth Street.

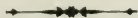
In spite of great expenditures on sewer system development and street improvement Mayor Parsons added about \$35,000 to the city's annual revenues by obtaining an increase of the saloon license from five hundred to one thousand dollars.

In 1918, the Magnolias was sold to Herman Weber, who with his sister, Mrs. Frederic Wilde, resided there until his death in October, 1938. Mr. Weber owned and operated the highly successful Weber Dry Goods Co. on 5th and Commercial. Mrs. Weber was the organist for the Lutheran Church.

The Weber children spent many hours playing under the front porch, the old servants' quarters. The small playhouse located in the backyard which was built for Mr. Weber's daughter (Alma), was later converted into her art studio.

After Mr. Weber's death in 1958, the house was turned over to the Weber children. Lester Weber, of Cairo, sold his interest to his brother, Harold Weber, of Cape Girardeau, who is now the present owner.

The beautiful Magnolias, which for a century was filled with the excitement of many great parties and entertainments, now stands silent.



## WALLS OF PROSPERITY

By SUSAN RYAN

Since Cairo was located at the confluence of the mighty Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, spring floods were an almost yearly danger. The construction of a levee system was very important for the welfare and safety of the townspeople.

The first known levee was built in 1818—when Cairo was first being settled—by William Bird around his trading house. This fortification proved to be very efficient and for years it kept out the surging waters.

Because of Bird's ingenuity and good fortune, the construction of levees around the entire town became the particular work of John C. Comyges, who was planning a trip to Holland, in an attempt to bring Dutch laborers to Cairo, to construct our levees as they had built their famous dikes. All went well until Comyges became ill and died; without his encouragement the other parties became disagreeable and the needed enterprise was abandoned.

1835 was the magic year for Cairo, as this was when work on her levees was begun. Little did anyone know that this was to be the beginning of new prosperity for this growing community! Anthony Olney was appointed General Superintendent of this task. A Major Duncan had made all required surveys and reported that an earthen embankment of five feet in height would secure the City against the highest swells of the rampaging river. When the embankments were completed, they consisted of levees along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers joined at a southern point (near confluence of the rivers), and also a cross levee—completed in 1843 by Miles A. Gilbert—connecting the other two, and thus encircling the entire city. The completed levees enclosed approximately 600 acres of land and their height was about seven or eight feet above the average terrain. Since the construction of this levee system at no time have flood waters entered into the City of Cairo.

The following year, 1844, the levees protected the City from one of the greatest floods in recorded history. Cairo was the link between St. Louis, Mo., and New Orleans, La. During this time of destruction and

desolation the entire Ohio and Mississippi Valleys received some form of malady—except within the protected walls of Cairo. Inside the levees food was plentiful while corn and cotton were harvested within the protective embankments. This incident again makes it clear why Cairo was well known as “Little Egypt.”

Further work on the levees was limited until 1878 when abrasions from the current of the river forced a low levee of 3 to 4 feet to be built between 18th street and 2nd street, along the Ohio shore. This levee was thought to be the greatest protection against flooding waters. But the extremely high waters of 1882-83 gave evidence that an even higher levee should be built. In 1897 another 3 feet were added to the levee, this being called the “old stone depot levee.” This levee once more saved Cairo from destruction.

The people of Cairo were not contented with the “depot levee” and in 1912-13 the levee was raised to 54 feet. This held back the terribly high waters of 1927 and 1937—when the levees almost gave way and the town was evacuated.

After the 1937 high water the present concrete levee walls were raised to the height of 65 feet above low water level.

As the people of Cairo look up at their levees they should feel a deep sense of security, for these walls have long protected these as well as their ancestors. As the flood waters rage and devastation is high, the people of Cairo can stand behind their “walls of prosperity” and give thanks to those, who for so long, strived through many hardships, in order to make her levees a reality.



## THE HERBERT HOME

By CHARLOTTE SUMMERS

### Introduction

The Herbert Home at 2606 Washington was built in 1876 by Thomas Halliday who later became mayor of Cairo. The green lawns were once the scene of fashionable lawn parties. Carefully preserved, the house is furnished with many choice and valuable pieces.

### Construction

The house of eight lovely rooms is constructed of red brick veneer over wood. What is now the basement laundry was then the large Halliday kitchen in which elaborate dishes were prepared by the Halliday cook, Lizzie.

Southern homes in the period following the Civil War made full use of their basements, which were the protection from summer heats, and the balustrades descending to the basement of the home is solid cherry.

Tom Halliday built his home around generous halls with air chambers in between them. He gave it a broad open stairway with polished



rail, high ceilings, a fireplace in every room except the kitchen, and elaborate chandeliers.

### Interior Styling

The furniture in the dining room was brought from the St. Louis World's Fair in 1906. The pieces were prize winning. The period is mission oak furniture, plate rail, and drop art-glass chandelier. One of the most outstanding points of the dining room is the collection of blue and white delft from Holland. The plate collection on the rail contains the plate Queen Enemea gave to Holland when she was crowned in 1898. The mural in the dining room was painted by an early sign painter from Cairo. The motif was taken from a collection of colored glazed tile, which is now framed and hanging on the wall.

The house has three sun porches. The southern porch is enclosed in glass, with window boxes and hanging baskets adding to the charm with flowers. A desk, sitting at the far end of the porch, once belonged to Grandfather Herbert who had an office on Ohio Street, next to Grant's office. The porch is now used as a music room or office.

The kitchen, originally the Halliday dining room, has been modernized. Once it contained a huge cook stove, had servants, and "dumb waiter" which is now closed off and converted into a wash room. The "dumb waiter" brought the food from the kitchen downstairs to the dining room. This has now been transformed into a large comfortable kitchen with dining area. It's built like a family room with a TV included.

The downstairs hall possesses the water colors by Virginia Herbert, now Mrs Ralph Gibson. Her most famous painting is "The Quiet Snow," which is a painting of the home after a snowfall. It has been exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of New York, International Watercolor Institution, Missouri Vicinity Show at City Art Museum at St. Louis. Also on the wall is a picture of Mr. Herbert's home on 12th at Poplar. The lovely white house was torn down two years ago. In the hall, standing by the library door, is a huge English Grandfather clock. It is equipped with two sets of chimes, Westminster and Whemington. On the other side of the door, on a table, sets a beautiful Chinese ginger jar in which the Chinese imported their ginger.

The library containing another one of Mr. Herbert's desks, including two maps, one of Cairo in 1839, and the other one of Illinois in 1837, were done by William Strictland, architect from Philadelphia. All the books are of history. Also Cairo's history can be found in this library. The collection of books were Mr. Herbert's and his father's. The furniture is antique and the rugs which are most unusual in the house are oriental. The home also contains lovely ornamental cartouche.

The living room, separated from the library by a double door, has Chinese oriental rug. The others in the house are Russian. To the right of the door sets a beautiful three fingered Lincoln rocker done in deep purple satin. The antique fans on the wall over the sofa were brought from Paris by Donald Herbert. Centered in the room is a lovely Steinway grand piano containing a picture of Donald Herbert. At one end of the sofa sets a Chinese vase made into a lamp. The vase is from San Francisco Chinatown.

The miniature portraits were painted by Mrs. Herbert's grandfather, John Fravel, who was a cabinet maker and portrait painter from Philadelphia. The lovely vases on the mantle made by Mr. Herbert's grandfather, are of the period the family moved into the house—which is the Nouveau Art—antique collectors are now collecting them.



One of the twin bedrooms, which is the guest room is located at the far end of the hall. The room is papered in English wall paper. The cast-iron mantle is the original. The vases on the mantle are the Nouveau Art. The room is furnished in the Empire Period of furniture.

Another bedroom located at the right of the hall, was Mrs. Herbert's until she died some years ago. In Mrs. Herbert's bedroom with its white wood work and fireplace, is a large pineapple poster bed, which is the symbol of hospitality, of Empire Period with small walnut steps going up to the bed from Iberville, La., near New Orleans. English imported paper of dark Victorian red roses and blue ribbons accents the room's beauty and warmth.

On the dressing table is probably the oldest object in the house. a rosewood jewel case, lined in pale green velvet, which was once the possession of Flora MacDonald, who saved Bonnie Prince Charles' life. The case dates to 1740 and is flanked on either side by very old scent and cologne bottles. Before the Victorian desk is a swivel chair which was once a part of a Mississippi river packet. Across the room is a Napoleonic sewing table from Louisville, dated 1820.

Another bedroom located next to Mrs. Herbert's room, is Virginia Herbert's room, now Virginia Gibson. The four poster bed is a very early piece with carved knobs made to attach a rope mattress. On the white mantle a pair of French porcelain horses flanked on either side by pink Bristol vases dated 1825. Above this mantle hangs a large original Currier and Ives print—"The Three Sisters" in an unusual lace like frame. The bedroom wallpaper is a copy of a 200 year old lace effect garlanded with roses found in Louisiana.

In the hall are three beautiful Navajo Indian rugs. On the walls are early prints of Boston, New Orleans, and St. Louis.

### History

The Herbert Home is one of three Halliday homes still standing. Tom Halliday had a large family up to thirteen or more. The family lived on all three floors.

The Herbert's moved in toward the turn of the century in 1907. They brought the kitchen up on the second floor, Herbert's made the kitchen where the Halliday's had their dining room.

Oscar Louis Herbert, son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Herbert, came to Cairo just after the Civil War period. His wife, Alberta Bradford Herbert, came from St. Louis in the year 1906.

Just two people live in the house now, Mr and Mrs. Ralph K. Gibson. Mrs. Gibson is the former Virginia Herbert. Mrs. Gibson has had paintings exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City and the Chicago Art Institute. Her studio is in the garage. The two-car garage was originally the barn for the Hallidays. She calls her studio the "Hayloft." Mr. Gibson is a sanitary engineer for the Tri-County Health Department.

### Conclusion

The Herbert Home has housed three generations within its lovely walls. The first, the Halliday family; second, the Herberts; and third, the Herbert Home is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph K. Gibson.

A native St. Louisian, Mrs. Herbert became an integral part of Cairo life, and her feeling for fine furnishings combined with the artistry of her daughter, Mrs. Virginia Herbert Gibson, has meant the preservation and enrichment of the original atmosphere of the gracious home.

# CAIRO'S PRIDE: THE MISSISSIPPI AND OHIO RIVERS

By CARL SWOBODA

Cairo, the southernmost city of Illinois, has long been proud of the two sister rivers, the Mississippi and Ohio, which surround the city on three sides and eventually meet a mile south of the town. Sister bridges to span the rivers and to connect the states of Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri, however, were not thought of until World War I, when Cairo became a strategic position for moving soldiers and military equipment. The ferry system just wasn't swift enough for that purpose; in case of future wars, bridges would be essential, allowing equipment to be moved at a very fast rate.

Two of the first men to realize the need for bridges at Cairo were E. A. Smith, a merchant-farmer, and John C. Fisher, the editor and publisher of the Cairo newspaper. During the early 1920's, Smith sought to have the federal government build a Y-shaped bridge to connect the states of Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri at Cairo. Fisher, in turn, gave strong support to Smith's idea through his newspaper by arousing the interest of the people in the Cairo area. Finally, a bill for the bridge was proposed to Congress but the federal government flatly turned it down because of the great cost. Consequently, Cairo's hope for the Y-shaped bridge was slowly and reluctantly abandoned.

Beginning to make headway, however, was a new idea; to build a bridge across one river, then later build another over the second river.

The memorable Florida and Gulf Coast development, which caused thousands of motorists to move from the North to the South through the natural gateway of Cairo, greatly helped gain support for a bridge at Cairo.

Harry E. Bovay, who had once constructed a toll bridge in Arkansas, one day crossed the ferry from Missouri into Illinois and saw the need for a highway bridge across the Mississippi River at Cairo. Immediately, he went to see the Cairo Association of Commerce, whose officials quickly approved the idea. With the cooperation of local bankers, who financed \$2,500,000 of the cost, and the citizens of Cairo and the surrounding area, who raised \$600,000 for the project, the Mississippi River Bridge was finally completed in 1929. Dedicated by Governor Louis L. Emmerson of Illinois on October 18th of that year, this was the first toll bridge at Cairo.

From its beginning, however, the Mississippi River Bridge met with continual bad luck. The first blow came when the Florida and Gulf Coast boom ceased, thus decreasing the revenue from tolls. The stock market crash of 1929, however, delivered the knockout punch. Many local investors in the stock of the bridge lost all but a small per cent of their investment. But, at least, Cairo had a bridge across the Mississippi River.

In the late 1930's, however, revenue from tolls steadily increased, and it seemed that the bridge would succeed at last. Thus, the Cairo Bridge Commission, established by Congress in 1934, received authority from the federal government to purchase the bridge from the local investors so that it could be freed after the remaining debt was paid. The commission was also given authority to build a bridge across the Ohio River at Cairo.

Thus the Ohio River Bridge was completed on November 11, 1932. Cairo's dream of two bridges was finally realized!

The Ohio River Bridge always carried heavier traffic than the bridge over the Mississippi River. Thus, it paid off its indebtedness of \$3,115,000 in the remarkably short time of ten years, and it would have been freed before that had not World War II caused a great decline in traffic. Consequently, the Ohio River Bridge was opened free to the public in 1948.

The Mississippi River Bridge, however, did not fare as easily. Although the freeing of the Ohio River Bridge added to its traffic, the bills still could not be paid completely. The Cairo Bridge Commission worked diligently to increase movement over the bridge. They persuaded shippers to route their trucks over the bridge; even the federal government helped the fate of the bridge by giving it support and acclaim. Consequently, the bills were finally paid, and in May, 1954, Governor William G. Stratton of Illinois and a representative of the governor of Missouri jointly cut the ribbons which freed the Mississippi Bridge.

Today, the two steel structures, Cairo's dream for 40 years, are crossed daily by 15,000 to 18,000 cars and trucks. Each with its shiny silver surface adorns the last bit of Illinois ground which a person sees going south and the first bit of Illinois land which a tourist sees proceeding north. From either, a traveller can also see two of the mightiest rivers in the nation flow together to form an even mightier river; the black, muddy waters of the Mississippi and the clearer, bluer waters of the Ohio.

Cairo is proud to be the site for the meeting of these two powerful rivers, but it is even prouder to be one of the few cities in the nation to have such excellent bridge service for the public's use.



## CAIRO PUBLIC LIBRARY—GIFT OF CULTURE AND INSPIRATION

By DENISE WATKINS

### Introduction

Occupying its sixteen lots with pride the Cairo Public Library stands tall and stately amid a shady, restful, tree-filled lawn as if it somehow realizes its grave importance explained so well in the words of John M. Lansden in his *History of Cairo*: "It would be hard to find an institution which has been more useful to the community in which it exists."

### History

This fine library is situated at 1609 Washington Avenue in the A. B. Safford Memorial Building in the city of Cairo at the southernmost tip of Illinois. As early as February 9, 1877, the Woman's Club and Library Association of Cairo organized it. In the beginning it operated in a one room building on the Ohio River levee. Then in July, 1877, Mrs. Alfred B. Safford, the daughter of a prominent citizen of Cairo and a member of the Woman's Club, bought the present site and had the building erected as a memorial to her deceased husband. The half block on which the building was erected was formerly a part of

Lake Edwards during high water. The Woman's Club gave its collection of books (about 1,500) which now number some 31,000 volumes. In return, a room in the building was given to the Woman's Club to use for their meetings. Mrs. Safford specified that the library should be governed by a board of directors composed of four men and five women (the latter being members of the Woman's Club).

### Growth

Since its founding, the Cairo Public Library has grown enormously. Following the death of Mrs. L. L. Powell, the first librarian, her friends gave money for the erection of a bronze tablet, the addition of a children's room (the Powell Memorial Room); and the remodeling of the entrance. Then after the death of the second librarian, Miss Effie A. Lansden, in 1941, another bronze tablet was erected and the reference reading room (the Lansden Memorial Room) was added. During its eighty years of operation only four librarians have served: Mrs. Powell, Miss Lansden, Miss Elizabeth Hilboldt, and Mrs. Evelyn J. Snyder, the present librarian. Through the years bequests ranging from \$100 to \$5,000, historical documents and pamphlets, and shelves of memorial books have been given. This is evidence that the citizens of Cairo are extremely proud of their highly rated library. The Cairo Public Library is credited by the library authority in Illinois with having one of the finest collections of books south of Springfield, and they compare favorably with any library of its size in the state. The books are of two major types: reference and circulating. Its file of local newspapers dates from 1848 and has been microfilmed. The library purchases new sets of encyclopedias periodically and replaces its Atlases as soon as new editions are available. Bound volumes of many magazines such as Harper's Atlantic Monthly and National Geographic date back to their first issue. By cooperating with area schools the library has certain colleges using its wealth of material for the assignment of term papers, and its large circulation leads the region.

### Description

The construction of the A. B. Safford Memorial Building began in 1882 by Lancaster and Rice Manufacturing Company of St. Louis, Missouri, and was completed in 1883. Few changes have been made in the lovely Queen Ann Architecture. Its exterior on the north, east, and south sides consist of two-toned glazed brick. The west side, of much cheaper brick, allowed for growth of the city and enlargement of the building. The windows, quoting from the Cairo Bulletin of July 22, 1884, "are broader than they are long," unique for the period. The niches on either side of the entrance doors hold bronze statues of Cleo, the Greed muse of history, and Concordia, a Roman goddess; which were presented to Mrs. Safford by citizens of Cairo in gratitude. The building now contains an "unfinished" basement; the first floor with the vestibule, the hall, the wide staircase, the reading rooms, the charge desk, the stack room, and the librarian's office; the second floor with a large square hall, the Woman's Club Room for meetings which is also an art gallery, a Woman's Club kitchen, an auditorium with a high ceiling of walnut, oak, and gum Paneling, and a historical reference room; and a small attic. The reading rooms are done in cheerful yellow and white with rubber tile floors. The children's reading room contains small shelves, and small tables and chairs in Chinese red decorated to please the taste of the "Junior patrons." Miss Mary Halliday, formerly of Cairo, gave the lovely Janet Scudder bronze statue fountain "The Fighting Boys" which frames the en-



trance of one of the most beautiful spots in Cairo. Some twenty-five paintings and much lovely statuary completes the picture and the cost is sustained by a municipal tax.

### Remodeling

At the present time, 1963, the building is undergoing a fine remodeling. A large fireproof addition has been added to the west side of the building as the new stack room, and will contain all the adult books. It is made of brick, concrete, and steel with beautiful lighting, movable shelving, and a vault for valuable maps and books. The old stack room is being remodeled into a reading room for adults and office and workroom for the staff, but the furnishings and shelving will be of the same period as the building.

### Conclusion

In the words of Mr. Rendleton Herring, president of the Social Science Research Council: "The public library in the United States is taken for granted. Predominantly local in character, both in support and management, it is deeply rooted in our national heritage. The community stands for much that is cherished in our tradition of equal educational opportunity and freedom of thought and communication. It takes its place along side the courthouse, the school, the church, and the town hall as an integral part of the American scene." The Cairo Public Library is the center of inspiration. Although all the ideals and ambitions of its founders haven't been realized yet, its history is one of honorable service to the community for nearly eighty years.



## THE LAST LINK

By DARYL LYNN WATSON

Shortly after the Civil War General Clark E. Carr wrote "Someday Cairo will be the largest city on this continent, and the time is sure to come when Cairo will be the largest city in the world." This observation was based on Cairo's location at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. But with the coming of locomotion, river trade lost much of its value and this prediction failed to materialize.

Since pioneer days the people of Cairo—"The Gateway to the South" dreamed of the time when their city would be connected to its neighboring states, Kentucky and Missouri, by bridges. Part of this dream was realized in 1929 when a bridge was constructed over the Mississippi River to join this Southern Illinois peninsula with south-eastern Missouri. Yet to come was the link with Kentucky. This would be quite an undertaking for the "Beautiful Ohio", usually serene and peaceful, could become a raging torrent when fed with rains and snow from its northern shores. During severe winters its channels were choked with ice floes that could damage a bridge immeasurably. Any structure spanning its waters must be built to withstand its fury.



But the people were determined, and on a fall day in 1933, a group of Cairo and Kentucky citizens gathered among the cottonwood trees that lined the Illinois shoreline, and turned the first earth for what was to become the magnificent Ohio River Bridge.

It took years of labor, but when completed in 1938, the Ohio River Bridge was decidedly a success. It was a massive structure—the total length being 5,865 feet. The length of the Kentucky approach was 2,464 feet, the Illinois approach was 571 feet, and the length of the main river spans was 2,830 feet.

The piers—sunk 60 feet in the sandy river bed and made of reinforced concrete—were 183 feet high. The tallest pier, 290 feet—was equal to the height of a 30 story building. All piers had openings or windows for appearance, to lighten the weight, and lessen resistance to floating ice.

Clearance under the bridge was 57 feet, with the highest known water in 1937, and 116 feet at low water.

The total weight of concrete used in construction was 56,400 tons and weight of structural steel was 6,700 tons.

In case of violent temperature changes, provision was made so that it was possible for the bridge to expand or contract 4.9 feet lengthwise, in accordance with the weather conditions.

The cost of this long anticipated link between Illinois and Kentucky was approximately 3,000,000 dollars. This expense was shared by the Public Works Administration and the states of Illinois and Kentucky.

On November morning in 1938 officials of Illinois and Kentucky participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony, thus opening the bridge to traffic. With this action a silent farewell was bid to the now unneeded ferryboats which had been the source of transportation across the river for many years. An estimated 80,000 persons congregated in Cairo for the dedication festivities.

The bridge was successfully operated on a toll basis for 10 years. Then on Armistice Day, November 11, 1948, bridge-freeing ceremonies were held in Cairo, and toll charges were removed from the Ohio River Bridge. Now the people of Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri were united in friendship and commerce through Cairo—the City of Bridges.



## EARLY SCHOOLS OF CAIRO

By BILL WINTER

### Introduction

During the existence of the Holbrook administration from 1836 to 1842, when the population ranged from less than a hundred to two thousand people, there were, no doubt, one or two schools in Cairo. There is no real record about these schools; but in 1864 a short history

was written which named one or two individuals who taught school here then. To understand this better we will have to know a little more on the history of the schools.

In 1853 the first trustees of schools were elected. At the beginning of the year they had no school-house, and their first step was to apply to the legislature for money obtained from the sale of school lands for the erection of a school house. On the 10th day of February, 1853, the Legislature passed the act they requested. Under this act the Trustees had to have the vote of the people before they could build a school. The voters assembled on the 21st day of May, they voted for a new school not costing over 500 dollars. On May 31, 1853, a contract was given to build a new school, twenty-five by forty-five feet and twelve feet high.

Charles T. Lind was the first to teach at this school on September 1, 1853. The building was used for sixty-five years. This first school has been gone for some time.

Two of the schools of Cairo are Douglas, which was located on Walnut Street between Douglas and Fourteenth Streets, and was erected in 1864. The other is Safford School, erected in 1867.

It was not until the year 1865 that the Trustees chose a superintendent of schools was Mr. E. A. Angel, who was in charge from 1865 to the summer of 1866.

Three of the older schools of Cairo are Douglas, located in the down town area; Safford, midtown, and Lincoln, which served the up town area. Douglas was built in 1864, Safford in 1867—Safford was first used as a combination grade and High school. It was located in the middle area of town so it could be easily reached by high school students from all parts of town and grade school children of the immediate area.

There were also a number of private schools in Cairo during early times. The Catholics maintained a "Female Academy of the Sisters of Loretto" known as the Loretto Academy. The academy was built on the western side of Cairo, opened in October, 1864, and patronized largely by the people of Cairo, however it did draw students from nearby areas. Later the school was discontinued and the Catholic schools, from primary including high school, were placed in the Church itself. A second private school was operated by the Lutheran Church. German was taught in this school. These schools were open to any who wished to attend. This school was also discontinued and no provision was made for those attending other than public schools.

This essay has attempted to provide a brief glimpse of education in the past years of Cairo and to give some idea as to the growth of the Cairo school system. Truly, Cairo has tried through the years to give its people a better and more liberal education.

## CAIRO SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

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